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The Old Testament Doctrine of Salvation

or,

How Men were Saved
in Old Testament Times

BY

WILLIAM DEAS KERSWILL, M. A., D. D.

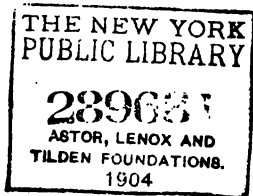
*Professor of Hebrew Language and Exegesis in The Theological
Faculty of Lincoln University, Pa., U. S. A.*

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PREFACE

COMPARATIVELY few Christians have more than a vague idea of how men were saved in Old Testament times. Their attitude is not hostile, but only agnostic. It may, or may not, affect seriously their own faith. But to be thus indifferent as to what may be the teaching of the Old Testament, is at least to open the way for neglect of the New.

Few would be prepared to deny that religious distinctions of some nature existed among men of old : few would hazard, either that all were lost, or that all were saved. But few have taken the thought to determine for themselves exactly the line of division.

Our Lord placed high value upon the Old Testament Scriptures when he said of them : " But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled " ; " One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled " ; " They have Moses and the prophets." He honored the Old Testament Scriptures in his

rebuke, "Have ye not read?" "Hath not the scripture said?" "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures."

Can we afford to have indefinite ideas regarding the same?

In the hope that a more definite and correct conception of what the Old Testament taught regarding salvation may be for the strengthening of faith and for the establishing of all truth, these pages are written. They are the result of a careful exegesis of the entire Hebrew Scriptures, extending over several years, during which this subject has been faithfully kept in view.

There is no attempt whatever made here to give a digest of other men's views. These may be found in their own works. Indeed the absence of anything at all comprehensive or satisfactory upon this subject is sufficient apology for the appearance of the present work. A brief treatise lately from the pen of Dr. Julius Bonmer, *Der Alttestamentliche Unterbau des Reiches Gottes*, Leipzig, 1902, deals with a kindred but not identical subject. The various works upon the Biblical Theology of the Old Testament touch upon it in a more or less fragmentary manner. Some of these, notably Schultz, are

PREFACE

v

unsatisfactory, because, as in his case, the Scripture texts referred to, when examined, very frequently do not bear out the statements made or they have an arbitrary or pagan interpretation placed upon them.

In the following pages I have chosen when quoting Scripture proofs to insert the Scripture passages themselves in the text. Experience must have taught every observing reader that it is almost useless merely to cite a list of proof texts in footnotes, without inserting the quotations themselves. Only one reader in a multitude then takes the trouble to verify them. Texts of doubtful application have been omitted, and wherever the English translation is specially at fault, I have taken it directly from the Hebrew. The more exact rendering "Jehovah" has been used instead of "The Lord" where required.

I have not labored to make the conclusions square with any particular "school," but have sought to place in concise form, what the Old Testament itself taught to men of its day as to their salvation. Authorities other than the Scriptures have been read, and where definitely used have been carefully recognized, but the preparation has been predominantly exegetical. The

purpose has been to discover, not what men think, but what the Old Testament says.

It is with the prayerful desire that it may be used for the increase of faith that this volume is sent forth.

W. D. K.

*Lincoln University, Pa.,
January 26, 1904.*

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THEOLOGICAL OVERSIGHT AND EMPHASIS .	I
II. THE OLD TESTAMENT CONCEPTION OF SIN	15
III. GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE SINNER .	50
IV. THE PLACE OF MESSIAH IN OLD TESTA- MENT SALVATION	86
V. JEHOVAH, THE GOD OF REDEMPTION .	115
VI. GRACE AND FAITH IN OLD TESTAMENT SALVATION	143
VII. THE OLD TESTAMENT CONCEPTION OF THE SAVED LIFE	167
VIII. OLD TESTAMENT SALVATION IN RELATION TO THE INDIVIDUAL AND TO THE WORLD	193



The Old Testament Doctrine of Salvation

I

THEOLOGICAL OVERSIGHT AND EMPHASIS

SALVATION is the most absorbing topic of human thought. Notwithstanding the apparent indifference of men,—the commercial spirit, the skepticism of science—it still remains that there is no subject which so vitally interests men as the question of salvation. Every one thinks about it. And we are widely mistaken if we suppose that men are not interested in it. The indifference of the moralist is only apparent. Even the sneer of the scoffer is a confession; it is the braggart effort of his conscious weakness to resist its pressure. After all, no subject interests, like this, the whole family of mankind—the cultured scholar, the man of affairs, the inventive genius, the toiling masses, the sin-scarred outcast. You see it in the stoicism of the Mo-

ammedan's swarthy face turned toward his mosque and his Mecca. You hear it in the plaintive note of the Brahman's self-abnegation, and in the ruder jargons and superstitions of baser beliefs.

Whether this interest be due more to the unspeakable, unchanging, ever-present need of the human soul, or whether, as in the Christian religion, to the matchless perfection and adaptation of the salvation provided, we may not now take time to consider.

Now there can be no doubt to us as Christians that the New Testament, in its own way, sets forth a salvation from sin, a salvation to meet the universal need of sinful men, not in a systematic way oftentimes, it is true, but better, in a larger way than could be compressed into a systematic setting: and in a more vital, thrilling way than would be possible in a formal didactic statement. In dealing with so great a question it oftentimes leaves us, it is true, upon the dim borderland which girts our farthest field of view, but not until it has brought us far in a clear path and given us unmistakably our bearings for eternity.

But there is a fact which we cannot ignore, and yet which is frequently overlooked even by

evangelical theologians. It is, that before the New Testament was given, men lived and died, men, sinful men, men like ourselves with a similar need. Was there for them a similar salvation? That is the question. We say similar. It could not have been absolutely the same: otherwise the actuality of Christ's life and death fills no place in Christian salvation. In treating of Christian theology few scholars have given due place to the fact that there was a salvation without the actuality of Christ's life and death upon the earth, without the actuality of his incarnation, resurrection and ascension. It is not easy to give balanced fairness to every phase of a great question, much less to this greatest of all questions. As every so-called heresy which has vexed the Church has been but the exaggeration of some truth to the exclusion of some companion truth, so, without wishing to be critical, let us say, many of the best recent works upon theology by believing theologians are marred by defect, by limiting their range to the New Testament, by unconsciously ignoring the fact that there was an efficient way of salvation before the life and the personality of Christ became a practical factor in salvation.

Theologians have sought earnestly to determine what shall be the starting point of their system, and what shall be the pivotal point, until "Christocentric" has come to represent the structural idea of perhaps the major part of modern evangelical theology, not, however, without raising difficulties, very great difficulties.

If we were to remember that there was a way, an effective way of salvation, before the life and personality of Christ became a practical factor in salvation, in other words if we were to begin with the way of salvation as it existed and was effective in the Old Testament, would not these later, additional features fall into their most excellent but proper place? Would we not avoid the complications which must arise from thrusting into the first place in a system that which was long absent? All glory to the incarnate and risen Christ! But let truth prevail. We do not honor him by giving to his life or personality a place in salvation which they do not hold. The thrust of James Martineau that we and he are equally Unitarian, that he believes in one God, and that we have only made Christ our God, finds a whisper of warrant in much even of the best Trinitarian theology.

Atonement fills a large place in any system of believing theology. And there are few of us who are not glad to admit that we have gained something from each of the great theories of the Atonement. Yet would not some of those theories require to be modified in order to allow for an effective salvation before the Incarnation? The various shades of mystical and pantheizing theories, from the Platonizing Fathers to Osiander and Schleiermacher, and the more cultured teaching of Bishop Westcott, all theories which represent man as saved by Christ's incarnation, by what Christ does in us, have naturally little to say about a salvation before that Incarnation. So all theories which really eliminate atonement and place moral influence in its place, whether in the crude forms of Socinus or Grotius, or in the more philosophical form of Coleridge or Bushnell, or in the evasiveness of Ritschl,—all these meet a difficulty in making a statement of Old Testament Salvation, prior to this influence of Christ's example or suffering or love or whatever else.

Let us not underestimate the need nor the value of the Atonement. But let us see that our theory of it does not deny, but does rather affirm, a

plan of salvation for the multitudes of mankind before the actual incarnation and work of our Lord.

Reconciliation has a large place in Christian Theology, but in any system which magnifies the subjective effect which Christ's sufferings had upon the sinner, in any system which makes reconciliation consist in the reconciling of man to God, rather than the reconciling of God to man, how was reconciliation effected and man saved before the scene upon Calvary? The older theologians would have swept away all such questions by saying that it was by anticipation, that the saint of old foresaw Christ's work. But can it be shown that that anticipation was sufficiently clear to be of practical use to the sinner of old? That there were foreshadowings which found their fulfillment in the actual work of Christ as now recorded in the New Testament, no one may dispute. But how will modern believing thought state the question of salvation so as not to overstate or misstate the place which Christ's actual work holds in reconciliation or the place of reconciliation in salvation? How did the Old Testament with its limited knowledge of Christ as promised, lead men out of sin into

holiness? How did the Old Testament teach the sinner to be saved?

If we say that men were saved in olden times without a practical knowledge of a promised atonement, are we not now making too much of the subjective influence of the Atonement in man's salvation, at least in some of the latest and most popular views of the Atonement? Are we not overweighting this side of the process of salvation and perhaps to the neglect of another phase of it?

Or again, if we must say that men were once saved without the reconciling offices of a Mediator, are we not now exaggerating and theorizing regarding reconciliation beyond what is true? Well, it will do us good to reflect upon a plan of salvation from which some of the features, now most emphasized, were absent, or, if present at all, were present in a very different proportion to that currently assigned to them now in systems of theology. If we are not going to go with the later theology in rejecting the emphasis once placed upon expiation and satisfaction, are we going to fare any better by swinging to the other extreme and construing everything into an argument that it is man and

not God who, in salvation, requires to be reconciled? In our aversion to legalism, have we been working out a theory which is without warrant in the Scriptures, and without power to save?

If in all this we take shelter in the fact that the sinner of old offered sacrifice for his sin, what meaning and what place are we to assign to his sacrifice in a salvation which had efficiency without the actuality of Christ's life and personality, but which nevertheless was capable of receiving such addition and fulfillment? Very evidently there was some relation, some correspondence between those sacrifices which passed away and the Atonement which endures. Let us remember that whatever differences there are between the Old and the New Testament way of salvation, the Old was effective. Men were saved through it. If we understand that Old Testament plan, will it not go far to give proper balance to each feature of the New?

It will not do to say that the Old has no meaning except as fulfilled in the New. There is a sense in which nothing has its complete meaning except in its relation to everything else. In the unity of God's work everything waits upon everything else for the fullness of its function and

meaning. But in another sense the Old Testament plan of salvation had meaning before the New Testament revelation was given; it meant something to the sinner of that day; it meant everything to him. Are we then going to say that we cannot gather together its meaning, its saving meaning? To understand it, and then to allow New Testament additions to fall into their proper place, may avoid many of the misplaced emphases of the best of modern theology.

We are glad to acknowledge the debt we owe to those who have given an exaggerated emphasis to individual features of salvation. We would have been very much poorer without them. Who would have been without the statement of the Divine supremacy, even though exaggerated, of Augustine, or the human capability of Pelagius, or the extreme legalism of Anselm? Have we not learned something from the ecclesiasticism of Bellarmin, the mysticism of Osiander, the "dependence" of Schleiermacher, the subjectivity of Ritschl?

Yet, no matter how fascinating the treatment may be by these men, we still want the truth, rather than its exaggeration. If the Old Testament then contains a plan of salvation which was

effective before the Incarnation and the New Testament revelation—a salvation which had a meaning to men of old,—let us discover that meaning, in all its details as then knowable. There is no theological treatise which does this, which tells us in an exact and orderly way how men were saved in Old Testament times, and what that salvation meant,—not what we can read into it, but what it meant then, what it contained then to make it sufficient and effective. This is our problem. It will not be easy, for several reasons.

In seeking to understand now the plan of salvation by which the Old Testament believer was saved, we must remember, paradoxical as it may seem, that although we have a sum total of more light upon the great question of salvation than he had, yet of that which he had we have less than he. We have been accustomed to walk by the greater light so long, that the lesser light means still less to us than it did to him. Hence it will be observed that while we may be in danger of placing a New Testament meaning upon an Old Testament statement, and thus make it mean too much, we, accustomed to the greater light of the New

Testament, are in danger of seeing in the Old Testament too little. Without the use of some of our senses, the remaining senses acquire a double efficiency, and without the New Testament revelation, men of old looked more deeply into, and made the greater use of, the Old. As "Rabbi" Duncan, I think it is, says, in effect, the man in the dim cave sees less, absolutely, than the man out in the sunlight; but the man standing in the twilight of the cave can see more upon the walls of his cave than can the man outside in the sunlight see upon the same dim walls.


Moreover in this same connection we must remember that some elements of interpretation which were present to the Old Testament inquirer are entirely or partially wanting to us,—a wealth of supplementary oral tradition which has not been preserved, the presence of local coloring and custom which enlightened and confirmed the teaching, the miracles which from time to time encouraged faith in the supernatural, and the voice of the living prophet.

If possible we must keep these considerations in view if we would estimate correctly the Old Testament teaching of salvation.

But, if we cannot discover how men were saved in Old Testament times, what the Old Testament taught the inquirer of that day, by looking at it from exactly the New Testament viewpoint, or by reading theological systems into it, much less can we discover what that Old Testament plan of salvation was, by making it conform to some preconceived subjective or philosophical theory.

If we are going to know what the Old Testament taught the man of its day about how he was to be saved, we must not begin immediately to explain away the Old Testament, we must not try to make the Old Testament mean something else, something that would accord with some theory of our own. If we wish to get a plan of salvation from our own theory, let us get it there; but if we are going to discover the plan of salvation which is taught in the Old Testament, then let us get it from that source, whether it accords with our theories or not.

If after discovering what it is, we are compelled to reject it, let us do so. But let us not make the Old Testament mean something else than it did, to the believer of old, in order to derive from it a plan of salvation which it does



not contain, but which would accord with some theory of our own.

This then sends us straight to the Old Testament; to the Old Testament as the man of that day had it, and, essentially, as we have it yet. What does it teach as to salvation? Man was a sinner. How did it teach him to be saved?

If, in this inquiry, it will not do to read back the New Testament into the Old, neither will it do to prejudge the Old to be myth, or legend, or folklore, or seek so to translate it as to make it smack of heathenism, or endeavor to render good prose by mongrel poetry which may the more have the jingle of a heathen ballad. It is true the New Testament, even the words of our Lord himself, might be called in abundantly to refute any such mistakes. But why should there be a necessity of making any such correction? why should we come to the study of the Old Testament with suspicion? And if we do come with any suspicion, will any correction be likely to avail? If we look chiefly for errors in the Old Testament, shall we be likely to discover its truth? If we are determined beforehand to make the Old Testament mean something different from what it says, our inquiry will yield

little. What we wish to know now is, not what some heathen mythology of other peoples reflects regarding religious beliefs, but what does the Old Testament teach regarding man's salvation. How was the Old Testament believer saved?

II

THE OLD TESTAMENT CONCEPTION OF SIN

It would be strange if man were a sinner and had no knowledge of it. It would be still more strange if man were saved from sin, and yet had no conception of his former state. Salvation implies perdition of some kind. An Old Testament message of salvation presupposes an Old Testament conception of man as in some sense lost. There is a relativity here. As light is, to some extent, known as different from darkness, the warm as different from the cold, so man's salvation stands out in vivid contrast with the dark background of his former unsaved state.

But how does the Old Testament represent the unsaved man? What was his distinctive characteristic? It is true, but not sufficient, merely to say that the Old Testament represents the unsaved man as a sinner. As to the bare fact of the existence of sin in men in general, from all known time, all are agreed. That is the most abundantly and variantly attested fact on record.

It is inscribed over every avenue of human achievement, carved in broken letters upon all of man's best efforts. It is the dark coloring in every picture of human failure. It is written in letters of blood over the field of human strife. There is no difference of opinion about the bare fact of the existence of sin in Old Testament times. But what did it mean to be a sinner? Immediately that we begin to inquire regarding the meaning of sin, its nature, its origin, its scope, its effect, the air is charged with controversy. Nor can we here take account of all the answers given. Many of them are ingenious and interesting in their own way, but have nothing to do with the Old Testament conception of sin, do not pretend to be an expression of it.

Turning to the Old Testament, the first teaching concerning sin which meets us is a momentous one, and it is even more far reaching and luminous than might at first appear. It is, first, that this state of sin was not man's original state.

Whether we like it or not, this sets aside at one stroke very much of the theorizing in which good and able men have been engaged, and it gives us a well defined starting point from which to understand the nature of sin. If this state of

sin was not man's original state, then sin was not essential to his nature. To speak of human sin as a necessity, either of man's original constitution, or of his finiteness or of any other contingency would not be to state the Old Testament conception; and that is what we are concerned to know now. On other and independent grounds, the theory of a necessitated sinfulness of humanity is not only utterly untenable, if we were here interested in refuting it, but it is contrary to all that is noblest in human aspiration.

But returning to the Old Testament teachings that this sinful state of man was not his original state, listen to its testimony. Could anything be clearer? "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." Gen. 1:27. Absolutely, this could not refer to the physical nature, but to the moral and spiritual nature; that man, as first created, was like God morally—holy or sinless.

Second, the decidedness with which this account of the creation of man anticipates and forestalls the evolutionary theory of man's origin and its implications regarding sin, is remarkable. If we go back to the preceding verses not only does it assert that man was made in the image of God as

differentiated from the image of the animal species already created, and to which a hasty judgment might have found him allied, but the teaching is as exact and explicit upon this point as if it had been written by some post-Darwinian, anti-Darwinian, interpolator. Thus in Gen. 1:21-25, we read, "And God created the great sea-monsters, and every living creature . . . after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind. . . . And God said, Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind, cattle, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kind," etc. Then how striking is the language of verse 26, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Not after the animal types already mentioned, which according to this Old Testament teaching were so specifically limited in reproduction to "their own kind," but man was made as to his real being, his moral and spiritual nature, after God's kind. The Hebrew word *mīn*, "kind" or "species" here used, is from a root which means to "divide," to "separate," and expresses the impassable limitations and divisions of species, which the record here so clearly and repeatedly asserts.

Even the more limited theory of evolution as

bearing upon man's origin, the view which supposes that only man's physical nature was evolved from the lower animal species, and that man's moral and spiritual nature was the result of a divine act of creation imposed upon this product of evolution, the view presented by Russel Wallace, and which many evangelical Christians would like to hold,—even this limited view of evolution as applied to man's origin, appears to be anticipated and debarred in the Old Testament record. For on the one hand the several species of animals were ordained to bring forth not man kind, but their own kind, and on the other hand man was made not after the animal kind, but after the God kind.

We are not here concerned to plead either for or against the theory of evolution. Admittedly, so far as applied, at least to the origin of the species or of man, it is only a theory. It does not claim to have a fact to rest upon. It is a fascinating hypothesis, but there is not one fact to cite, not one case where a genuine type has ever descended from a different type. To hang it back in the millions of antiquity, only hangs it so much more in air ; it does not secure one case of fact upon which to rest it. If we like the theory



and hold it, let us be candid with ourselves that as yet it is a theory, in this sphere, without a fact. There are facts related to this theory, running parallel to it. It is a fact that there are striking similarities between the several species, even between the lower animals and man. But to say that there are striking similarities between one and the other, is very different from saying that one is evolved from the other, that the similarity in one is evolved from the similarity in the other. That would require a case of fact to confirm it. And the scientist is the last man who should claim currency for a theory without fact.

But although these similarities traversing the face of creation do not prove that one species was evolved from another, they do perform a very important function. They render the world, including the creature world, a studiable, knowable world. It is so arranged in lines of relative similarity that when we have discovered the construction and function of the organism of one class or one sphere, we have, through that similarity, an open door to begin our investigation and understanding of another class. In other words, this world is an orderly related world, a universe, not a chaos. It is along these lines of

similarities that physical and medical science has moved, and placed humanity under so great a debt of obligation. And much of the most successful investigation in physical science has been pursued upon the supposition that the theory of evolution is true. As an incentive, as a working hypothesis, it has promoted investigation. But that too would not prove the theory of evolution to be true. To bore for water, upon the theory that there is water there, and strike oil, does not spoil the oil. But neither does it prove that the theory upon which you were working was correct. So, very profitable results may be derived from investigation which has been pursued upon a false supposition, inspired even by a false theory.

Now all that there is of fact running parallel with the theory of evolution, the Old Testament allows for. The similarities are implied in the distinctions made. The similarities are the facts. But to impose a causal nexus between these several similarities and classes or species, would be something more, and we would require a case of fact to establish it. Has there not been a confusion made here by the evolutionary theory, between ordered similarity and causal



sequence? The Old Testament however has carefully distinguished. It teaches that each class of animals reproduced after their own kind, and that man was made, not after the animal kind, but after the God kind, in "the image of God."

Hence, although as a working hypothesis in physical science the theory of evolution has been assumed in much of the most fruitful investigation, it is not for this reason rendered true, nor, so far as it relates to the origin of man, can a case of fact be cited. But what is especially to our purpose here is, that it is definitely anticipated and debarred by the teaching of the Old Testament. Every one is at liberty of course to make his choice between Darwin and Moses, to claim kinship with the beast or with God, to look upward or downward for his origin—"to Paradise or to the Zoo,"—but he cannot choose both. They are clearly exclusive, the one of the other. It would not be possible now, with all the details of later theories before us, to make a statement of man's origin and primitive state which would more definitely forestall the evolution theory of man's origin. Man's physical organism has many resemblances to the various types of

animal organisms, resemblances which have served a most beneficent purpose, as in medicine and surgery, so that much investigation profitable and applicable to man has been pursued by reference to the organism of the lower animals.

There is no inherent reason why the physique of man might not have been produced by evolution from that of the lower animals; yet there is no fact to show that it was so produced. Eminent scientists differ among themselves regarding evolution, even as a working hypothesis, and there is evidence that in some places it is losing its hold. Recent deliverances of Lord Kelvin, the equal if not the superior of any physicist of the day, have called the attention of fellow-scientists to this fact. Prof. Karl Pearson has lately described one of Lord Kelvin's statements as "an attack on the Darwinian theory of evolution." And Sir William Thiselton Dyer is reported to have said that Lord Kelvin had in effect "wiped out by one stroke of the pen the whole position won for us by Darwin."¹


Indeed, while I have met many evangelical believers who have been ready to give a "wide-open" assent to the theory of evolution, upon

¹ Quoted in *Christendom*, June 6, 1903.

pressing the inquiry into things definite and detailed, I have seldom (I think never) found one who was willing to outline exactly his chimpanzee pedigree and deliberately and positively assert that he really believed it. Many have thought that they believed it, until they attempted to make a rational statement of it. Then they have found that it was one thing to make light of the creation record in Genesis, but quite another thing to substitute something better.

But returning to the Old Testament record, not only does it teach that man's now sinful nature was not his original state, but as we have just seen, it teaches that he did not derive his nature as it now is, either in part or in whole, by evolution from the lower animals. How then did he come to possess a sinful nature? How did he come to be a sinner? For such we soon, at least, find him, as his acts testified and as he still is.

Here in the third place we meet the next great fact about human sin, that although sin was not an original element in man's nature, neither was it a result of his origin through evolution from the lower animals, yet it was a possibility. This is assumed in the first recorded command given



to man, in the first duty imposed, in the first covenant formed. It is assumed that it was possible for man to do the opposite, to do the wrong instead of the right. Not only was the possibility of sin assumed, but the result which would follow actual sin was positively announced, "Thou shalt surely die."

Indeed, to have created man sinless, in such sense as to make him utterly unable to sin, would have been to make moral action on his part impossible, it would have been to create him without the dignity of a moral being, without its responsibility, of course, but without its loftiest, and almost infinite, possibilities. If man had been necessitated in this sense to do the good, then there had really been no such thing as good for him.

The Old Testament is definite upon these two points, that not only was sin not man's original state nor a necessary condition of his finiteness or of any other contingency, but neither was his continuance in his sinlessness a necessity. The Old Testament teaches that it was possible for sinless man to sin. This may seem to us a metaphysical contradiction. But why should we say so? It is impossible now. It never occurs now,

to be sure: there is no sinless man now, as man was originally sinless. It seems to run counter to a principle universally recognized in the domain of human action as we now know humanity. And yet to the evangelical Christian there is one analogue: "Sinless man can sin—that is the mystery of the Fall. An ungodly man can believe—that is the mystery of the Rise."¹ According to the Old Testament human sin was a possibility.

Fourth, there is one more teaching which the Old Testament sets forth in this connection. It is that man thus originally sinless, and with the possibility of sinning before him, was yet nevertheless not to be kept forever in this state of uncertainty. He was to be tested as to his obedience to God. He was tested. That a sinless being should be indefinitely facing the possibility of falling into sin, would surely have been undesirable. Human existence would have lacked the splendid completeness and peace of an ultimate certainty. At least, the Old Testament teaches that, whether or not, man should fall into sin, he was not to be kept in endless suspense and uncertainty. To effect this a definite, clearly-

¹ *Primeval Revelation*, p. 257.

stated, but limited, test was imposed upon man. As the Old Testament reflects here and later, if man had successfully borne that test for a limited time, he would have been confirmed in sinlessness without doing violence to his free and moral nature.

As for the test, it was both real and persistent. It was a test also which would determine whether or not man would conform his life to the expressed will of God, which will of God is here incidentally taught to be the standard of human conduct. As a test it was real. It had to do with a frequently and necessarily recurring appetite. Yet it was not an appeal to a sinful appetite, for such man, as a sinless being, did not yet possess. Nor was it even an appeal to an appetite which could not have been supplied, without disobeying God's expressed will, *i. e.*, without sin. All other fruits were allowed, this one only was forbidden. So the mere appetite of hunger could have been satisfied equally well without disobedience.

It was not arbitrariness, of course, to forbid man the one tree ; it was a mere necessity of making the test. It was then, not a test of the strength of a certain appetite, but a test of his obedience,

of his conformity to the expressed will of God. The test was thus the least exacting possible if it were to be a test of the attitude which man would maintain toward the known will of God. Some decided test was necessary. The only alternative, as we have already seen, would have been, either an endless suspense with the possibility of a fall into sin at any time, or else, a necessitated non-moral nature.

The Old Testament has preserved an account of this testing, and of its result. It is as plain as that simplest of all languages, the Hebrew, could make it. Yet it is wonderful how many plans have been invented to make it difficult. Different men of very different ideas have alike sought to make it an exploiting ground for their favorite theories. Even great men have their weaknesses, and many have made use of this passage to prove this. Some men of philosophic turn naturally have endeavored to interpret this incident in accordance with their philosophic theories. Others who have specialized upon heathen religions have tried to find their totemism or their fetichism in it, and the skeptic, of course, seeks for something in it which will cast doubt upon the teaching of Scripture elsewhere, or

something which will offend the ideals of the Christian. Each with his own bias, some friendly and some unfriendly to Scripture, finds an interpretation to suit him. But the discerning believer, who brings no theory from elsewhere, should have little difficulty in discovering the main drift of the passage. He sees that the event here described is represented as a crisis in human history. Whatever else it was, it was a crisis. After it man was not the same as he was before, the relations between God and man were altered: man's outlook was altered; his very relation to nature was altered. It was a crisis event.

Furthermore every one must see that in this record a third party is represented, an agency of evil as tempting man to disobey the expressed will of God. That although sin or evil was hitherto not existent in the human race, yet it already existed somewhere in the universe and that an agent of that evil now sought to tempt man to disobey God. This was the other factor in the test. This assured that the test would take place. The visible agent used was a serpent. Had no visible agency been employed man might have confused that tempting voice

with that of his Creator. Of course man did not consider that the visible serpent over which, together with the rest of the animal creation, he had been given dominion, was the real tempter. We do not know how much information, if any, God had already given man about the existence of evil beings, when he had come down, as later he did, doubtless in human form, and talked with man and initiated him into his great heritage. But in the conversation which follows between God and man, the dignity and power attributed to the Tempter makes it very evident that the visible serpent was not considered, even by the man, as the real agent, but that there was present a powerful evil spirit, which the Scriptures elsewhere characterize as "that old serpent the devil."

What is clear in this record and sufficient, ah, sad sufficiency! is that man was tempted by an evil power through the visible presence of a serpent. Men may object that this is crude, but men have been engaged almost from that time until the present trying to devise some other explanation to supersede it, and have failed. As to the exact means which were employed to present the suggestion of disobedience, the record

does not say. Whether it was by vocal utterance with which Satan empowered his visible agent, or whether he simply made use of the action of the serpent as it ate of this particular fruit, in order to suggest to mankind their restriction, and to insinuate to man that God was arbitrarily forbidding them from partaking of the same, the record does not say. Either of these means finds analogy elsewhere in Scripture. Sufficient is made clear, viz., that the Tempter suggested (through the serpent) that God was arbitrarily and unfairly withholding from mankind the fruit of a certain tree, called "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." It was presented in that most effective of all forms, as an insinuation, a suspicion of God's beneficent fairness, a suspicion which disarms suspicion.

It is not of course implied in this record that this fruit was not fruit, nor that it was intrinsically different from the fruit of any other tree of the Garden. As we have already seen, a test was necessary. Something had to be singled out to make the test and this was the only recorded difference between this fruit and any other. Here again, theorists have been active, some trying to make it mean more, some trying

to make it mean less. But whether we like it or not, whether it appeals to our bent of mind, philosophical, mythological, skeptical or otherwise, there cannot be much doubt about what this Old Testament record intends here to say. To sum it up, man was placed upon a limited and definite trial as to his obedience by being forbidden to eat of the fruit of a certain tree called the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Through the visible form of a serpent the unfairness of God's beneficence was insinuated to man and suspicion cast upon it, and he disobeyed God's expressed command by eating of the fruit. That is enough. If there is more in it, very well. But if there is not more in it, this is sufficient.

Now this brings before us another vital feature of the Old Testament teaching concerning human sin. It is, fifthly, that the initiator, the suggester of this sin was not man. Man sinned "being tempted." How could sinless man initiate sin? What would be the moral status of a sinless man who, absolutely, could not sin? We need a standing ground between these two, and it is found nowhere in the whole realm of thought, except in this Old Testament explana-

tion that there was a tempter. It avoids the contradictions and accounts for the facts involved in each. Without it the origin of human sin is a hopeless perplexity.

Of course some one will say that this only pushes back the difficulty one step farther. But let us not be confused by mere words. We do not expect to take up Satan's account. If we clear our own horizon we do well. In its teaching the Old Testament record does two things. First, it relieves the difficulty so far as mankind is concerned; if we do that we do well. And secondly, it places the initiation and explanation of sin upon a fact. That fact is the fact of a powerful evil agency, the fact of "Satan," as he is later definitely named. Did you ever try to explain the world-wide leaguishness of human sin apart from its origin in one evil personage, or apart from its continuance under one evil leadership? The map of the world is crossed and recrossed by social, racial and political lines, but can you explain the unity of the house of evil, its devilish intent, except upon the ground implied by our Lord, "If Satan were divided against himself how would his kingdom stand?"

It is with this fact then, this fact all too evi-


dent, this fact, however mysterious, of the existence of an evil being, the fact of Satan, that the Old Testament account of the origin of sin begins. That sad fact is the only explanation of how human sin began, how sinless man could sin. To attempt to go beyond this fact, however, to the explanation of evil in Satan himself, to go beyond fact to fancy, would be futile, or at least uncertain. The psychology of Satan would be too largely speculative.

But the most important teaching of the Old Testament concerning sin is yet to be mentioned. It is, in the sixth place, that being tested and being tempted he yielded to the temptation, he disobeyed God, he sinned. But what did this involve? What did it comprise? What does the Old Testament teach that human sin, from its beginning, was? As we have already said, we do not need to debate about the mere fact of man's sin. It is traceable in his footprints everywhere, it mars the fairest pages of his literature and makes tragic all his history. But what did human sin according to this Old Testament teaching involve?

It unspeakably altered both his status and his nature. Hitherto he had been obedient; now he

had been disobedient. Hitherto he had acted in harmony with God's desire; now he had disregarded that desire. Hitherto he had had no sense of the displeasure of God, for it had not hitherto existed toward man; now he carried about with him everywhere that sense of having displeased God. Hitherto he had kept God's law; now he had broken it. Hitherto he had had a desire to meet with God, God had been his Associate and Friend; now he shrank from seeing him, or hearing his voice.

Can any one imagine a change more comprehensive than that which this one act of disobedience wrought for man? The extent of this change was due, not to the grossness or the enormity of the act of disobedience in itself, not to the degree of hateful intention which was thrown into it by man, but it was due to the fact that it began something, began a changed relation to God, began a type of life pulsating from its depths with another set of desires, swayed by another kind of motives, seeking another type of ideals. How unspeakable the change! It could not be undone; it could not be arrested; it had become a current in an ever-moving stream, the stream of human existence;



it would affect everything which his activity would touch.

Man has become changed. He does not, as he once did, delight to meet God. He feels his guilt. He seeks to hide from him, when he hears his approach. Ah, he is different from what he was, sadly different! The difference is that he has sinned and he is a sinner.

It is useless to object that that one act of disobedience was insignificant, out of all proportion to the momentous results in the nature and status of man, which the Old Testament teaches that it initiated. That would be to shut our eyes to similar facts in the process of sin in the world to-day. The most revolting and monstrous depravity of to-day, had a precursor in some first, and apparently trifling, act of wrongdoing.

There are degrees of depravity in sin, of course; and it is not taught here that mankind immediately reached the lowest depths of depravity, though, as you read the record, how soon did man manifest some of the most revolting traits, —Cain and Lamech their homicide! Even the better Abel felt a sense of wrongdoing as expressed in his offering.

Whether the depravity were extreme in certain

individuals or not, the fact remains that there had come a difference in man's nature and in his relation to God. He had become different from what he was when God had made him in his own image; a difference which is all too evident in man's subsequent history. That difference is most distinctively and comprehensively described as sin. Sin is the word which is characteristic of that difference.

Many less important incidents of sin are left unmentioned. The Old Testament does not tell us how long man remained sinless, how long before this change came. That is a question which sinks into insignificance before the momentous question of saving men again from their sin. From the record we can however estimate the extreme limit of his sinless state. Adam was one hundred and thirty years old when Seth was begotten. But before this had taken place, other sons, at least Cain and Abel, had been born and had grown to manhood, for each had chosen his respective pursuit in life. These sons were therefore probably twenty-five or thirty years of age before the untimely death of Abel at his brother's hand, and they were born after the fall. Hence, deducting this, we have about one hun-

dred years as the extreme possible limit of the sinless portion of man's career. There is no minimum limit stated, and so the actual period of his sinlessness may have been much less than one hundred years, but not more.

Whether any children were born, not in sin, *i. e.*, during this sinless period or not, we are not told. It would not affect the universality of sin ultimately, as we shall see, nor the necessity of a salvation. There is nothing in the Old Testament teaching to show that children were not born to our first parents before their fall. The command, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth," Gen. 1 : 28, did not wait for the Fall. It was given with their first blessing, was a part of it indeed. Read it again, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him ; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply," etc. Gen. 1 : 27, 28.

Of more value however than the views of any who seek to interpret the Scriptures, is the teaching of the Old Testament itself. While it does not affirm that children were born before the Fall, it records the fact that "to multiply" was an



original command, a command given to man in his sinlessness. It further states moreover, and likewise before the Fall, that "Adam called his wife's name Eve [which is from the root 'to live'] because she was the mother of all living." If this latter, "because she was the mother of all living," was spoken by Adam it would seem to imply that children were already born to our first parents, and that, in the time of their sinlessness, unless it were spoken in anticipation of the relation which Eve would hold to the whole human race. If, of course, these words were simply the explanation given by Moses, and not the statement of Adam, then they would have no bearing upon this particular matter. If, however, the Old Testament is intended to imply that children were born to our first parents in their sinlessness, we may perhaps find a reference to the union of the sinless and the sinful of their descendants in that much debated passage, "And . . . the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." Gen. 6:2. If this be its reference it would account for the sinfulness of their posterity in general.

This passage is of course open to other and

possibly more deserving interpretation. The idea, occasionally suggested, that it represents an early Old Testament belief in the intermarriage of angels or other superhuman beings with mankind, is of course entirely borrowed from heathen mythology of later times, and has no warrant in this record. It is a part of a tendency in skepticism at present, to endeavor to degrade the lofty teachings of the Old Testament, to the level of heathen mythology ; but discerning believers will easily make the distinction.

The Old Testament therefore teaches, in the seventh place, that the nature of sin was, to increase both in extension and in intention and this both in the individual and in the race. When once begun, it did not cease, it did not even remain static. It increased in extent and in depravity. It is admittedly difficult, upon mere ethical grounds, to show why this one sin of Adam should result not only in subsequent sin in himself, but also in the subsequent sinfulness of all his descendants, and neither Federalism, nor Realism, nor any other theological theory may entirely relieve it. Yet, would not the opposite alternative be even more difficult and hazardous? What would be the result, in the

moral world, if sin could bring forth sinlessness, if sin were at no disadvantage, if the results of sin and sinlessness were the same? Where would moral distinction find a place in such a world?

Whether we can explain the ethical justice of it or not, the Old Testament teaching here seems to be the only alternative—that sin, once begun, should propagate itself in the individual and in the race. In this the Old Testament teaching is confirmed by facts, by the universal history of man. Have sinful parents ever begotten a child who did not in time evince the traits of sin, some more, some less? It does not teach that all the children born to Adam after his disobedience were great sinners. Herein the record is in accord with human history still. The children of godly parents yet are, some Abels, some Seths, but, alas! also some Cains, but all sinners. Even the Abels need a sacrifice. In all the subsequent history of mankind, has it ever been known that any member of our fallen race has ever begotten a child who did not, in time, manifest the evidence of his sinfulness? This is only what the Old Testament teaches in the succession of Adam's sin. Why should we



quarrel with the Old Testament for teaching something which everyone recognizes to be a fact the world over?

Thus the Old Testament leads to this, that not only did the one sin, the one disobedience of Adam, lead to other sin in himself and in the race, but that sin became universal in mankind. It teaches the universality of sin. Not only at a later date had "all flesh corrupted his way upon the earth," Gen. 6: 12; "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually," Gen. 6: 5; but even the apparent exceptions are only exceptional in degree (and in grace as we shall later see), for sin is definitely recorded even of Noah, who was said to have been "a just [or, righteous, R. v.] man and perfect in his generations." Gen. 6: 9. Just so, sin is found to-day in the believer, though, in many ways we distinguish him from the abandoned sinner. Schultz has labored hard to show that the universality of sin was a later conception of Old Testament teaching, but he has done so by endeavoring to make almost every passage which he quotes mean something else than what it says. He has enslaved himself to the "development"

theory, and seems to prize it infinitely more than the truth of the Old Testament. His unconcealed determination, that the Old Testament shall suffer and its statements be misrepresented to any extent, rather than that his theory shall fail, renders his treatment of this subject of almost no value.

Schultz, for example, tries to show that the earliest Old Testament documents "nowhere attribute 'sin' to the men of God of those days, but speak of righteous men whose careers were unblemished and who 'walked with God,'" ¹ and he cites the case of "Noah." Gen. 6: 9, 22. But every beginner in Hebrew knows that the Hebrew word for righteous does not mean sinless. And further, if he had quoted one more passage regarding Noah, he would have found that the Old Testament represents even Noah as guilty of revolting intemperance. But that would have been stating the truth, theory or no theory to the contrary notwithstanding; which is the very thing that Dr. Schultz, we are sorry to say, too seldom does. We can take little notice, even by way of refutation of such unabashed misrepresentation of what

¹ *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. II, Eng. Trans., p. 292.

the Old Testament really states. Our chief object here is to sum up the Old Testament teaching regarding salvation, irrespective as to what theories have to come or go. That sin was universal among men, even in believers, just as it is to-day, is taught by this very case of Noah.

Not only was sin universal, but irreparable so far as man's power was concerned. The tendency of sin once begun in the human race, according to Old Testament teaching, was to continue, not to cease; to increase, not to decrease; to become worse, not better. How rapid was the course of evil from the apparently trifling sin of Adam's disobedience to the murderous act of Cain! From the remorse and regret even of Cain, to the defiant impenitence of Lamech! From the occasional crime of the first generations to the general lawlessness of the Deluge period!

But once more, before we pass from this question of the Old Testament teaching regarding sin, it will be asked, Was not the standard lower then than in New Testament teaching? Are there not acts countenanced in the Old Testament which could not now be other than un-

sparingly condemned? Here we must not confuse the standard of right and wrong with the degree of punishment or condemnation meted out. The standard is always the will of God; the punishment is, (ought to be, we would say,) suited to the circumstances. Different circumstances or more complete knowledge, change very much the character of the act, render it really a different act, so that it should receive a different form of condemnation. To trample somewhat thoughtlessly over the estate of another would be very different from going in the face of a definite trespass notice, and would deserve different punishment.

We said the standard was the will of God. That is very clearly taught in the first case recorded. Man was not to eat of the tree, because forbidden by the expressed command of God. To eat of that tree, or to do anything else contrary to the will of God, would be wrong, would be sin. It was not right or wrong upon the ground of utility—that was the Tempter's theory—though utility is involved. Nor was it upon the ground of happiness, though that too is involved. All other considerations give place, according to the Old Testament teaching, to the one consid-

eration, Does it accord with the will of God? The ground of condemnation lay not in the eating of the fruit, but in the eating of the fruit "which I commanded thee saying, Thou shalt not eat of it." There are other theories of the standard of conduct, but this is the Old Testament theory. The standard was the will of God. Every act contrary to the will of God is sin. Every such act whether done in ignorance or not! Whether done by child or adult! Yes, there is only one standard, and that the perfect will of God. But is all sin punished upon the individual? Ah! that is another question. Sin is punished in accordance with responsibility. With New Testament knowledge and large responsibility, the punishment is righteously great; the offense is great. But with lesser knowledge, as was often the case in the Old Testament, the responsibility was less; the act was really different, the punishment was less. If knowledge and responsibility would entirely vanish, what then? It would still be sin. Would punishment be visited upon the irresponsible individual? Surely not. For manifest reasons the Old Testament, as well as the New, has little to say upon this question. It could not benefit those who discuss

it, for they would be among the number of the responsible.

Equally evident is it that it could not benefit the irresponsible; and the Bible always addresses some one. It is true that in some sense "the times of ignorance God winked at [R. v. overlooked]; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." As men's knowledge and responsibility increased, so did the punishment due to their sin, for the sin itself became more sinful, became different. This is a very necessity of the unchangeableness of God's character. To maintain exactly the same attitude toward the penitent as toward the impenitent, toward the ignorant as toward the informed, toward the responsible as toward the irresponsible, would be the very antithesis of the unchangeableness of God which is taught in the Scriptures. But as to the standard of human conduct in the Old Testament, it was the highest possible, the perfect will of God. The first act of man and every succeeding act were tested by it, and everything contrary to it was sin. But whether God condemned and punished sin and to what degree depended upon circumstances.

Thus we have made a survey of the Old Tes-

tament teaching regarding sin. Whether its doctrine be pleasing to us or not, it seems to be true to the facts.

The remains of extra-biblical records, so far as they have anything to say, give similar testimony regarding the universality and effect of human sin. If, however, there were conflict between the biblical and the non-biblical representation, we would be compelled to discriminate in favor of the record given by men of lofty character such as Moses, reared upon the rigid code of Old Testament morals, as against even the best of heathen chroniclers, knowing what we do of the disadvantages of their civilization. But there is no conflict upon this question.

This then was sin as the Old Testament taught of it:—It was not man's original state. It was not a necessity either of his limitations or of his evolution. But it was a possibility, the result of which was to be made manifest by a definite test. In its initiative as a suggestion sin came not from sinless man but from the Tempter. Its first and repeated expression was disobedience to the will of God which altered both man's nature and his status and persisted in rapidly increas-

ing forms throughout the whole succeeding race.

Did man need a salvation? Was there such for him?

III

GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE SINNER

WE have traced the Old Testament conception of sin. And we have noted the effect which sin had upon man. But what effect had it upon God? Or what was God's attitude toward man in this altered and sinful state? How did God regard the sinner?

As we now stand in this favored time before the Cross, where the lights and shadows are interpreted, as we read its meaning, we know what his attitude to man is now. The Christian world echoes it with unceasing song, and the lives of believers are a present testimony which no argument can refute,—“He saw me ruined in the fall, yet loved me.” But there is some difference of opinion perhaps, regarding what the Old Testament teaches upon this question. Some scholars will admit only, and that even somewhat grudgingly, that the prophets of the eighth century and onward give some idea of God's love toward the sinner.

But we cannot halt his mercy here. Can it be that the same God who has bestowed such grace upon us was indifferent to the yearnings of similar men in other days? If he were, the fact would have to be accepted, and an explanation looked for later. Facts must rule. We must not fetter ourselves, on the one side or the other, with a theory which will prohibit free investigation. God stood in some attitude toward the millions of men before the utterances of the eighth century prophets, stood in some attitude toward the first sinful man and every succeeding sinner. What was that attitude? The Old Testament has told us so much about how man became a sinner and how sin changed him. Does it leave him there? Does it tell us nothing about how God looked upon him now that he had become a sinner? When man disobeyed God's express command, turned his back upon God's authority, did God shut the door upon man, or did he tenderly follow him, and, like a loving parent, watch from the open door which way he went, and yearn for his sometime return? Or, now that this breach had come, who was it that required to be restored? Was it God to man, or man to God, or was it both, or was it

neither? Especially, was it God? Theologians, many of whom have largely overlooked the fact that there was an Old Testament plan of salvation, have differed very widely among themselves as to whom Christ's atonement took effect upon primarily. All "moral influence" theories including of course all Ritschlian types make the Atonement, or what they have left in its place, take effect first upon man, to overcome his opposition or misconception; while systems as different among themselves as those of Arius, and McLeod Campbell and Hodge make it take effect by sympathy, or by satisfaction, primarily upon God.

It is both useless and presumptuous to speculate about this. We need to go to some source of information. Men's predilections and theories warp their conclusions. If the evolutionist begins by supposing that back in a dim age man was passing slowly, gradually into consciousness of responsibility, floundering in a nameless stage between the beast and the man, it is useless to ask him anything about primitive man's religious status, or God's redemptive relation toward him. If he disobeyed God's will then, would he be a sinner? If he obeyed God's command, would he



be a saint? Such questions would be unaskable. To seek to interpret man's spiritual status at a stage when he was too highly evolved to be assigned his place with the beast that perished, and yet not highly enough evolved to be a fellow-dweller throughout eternity with the angels and the redeemed of later days, is to see the absurdity of the theory which leads to it.

Or again, if the skeptic begins by supposing that the primary religion of man was a degraded fetichism or totemism or polytheism, and then begins to cut out every statement in the Old Testament or elsewhere which does not suit his theory, what will he do when he wants some facts to support his theory? If those other portions deserved only to be thrown away or branded as deception, will he put himself upon record as a trickster and pretend to build a theory upon just the parts that please him?

It requires no argument to show that he who wishes to know the truth, whether believer or unbeliever, cannot take any such method. The Old Testament has given us an explanation of the origin of sin and what that sinfulness involved in man, an explanation which, beyond all comparison with others, meets the facts in the case.

Let us examine further what it teaches regarding God's attitude toward the sinner from the beginning and ever afterwards. Let us not cast aside those passages or their interpretation which will not support our theory, neither let us suspect the truthfulness of a narrative because it has been condemned by some writer for having clashed with his theory. When we hear very imperfect and sinful men dealing very imperiously and even contemptibly with the Old Testament we cannot but ask, in the interest of truth, who knows the better regarding those events of long ago, "holy men of old" (and if you are a believer in the New Testament, "as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"), or the modern critic, who does not even claim to be specially moved by any one? One thing which impresses the impartial mind as he follows the methods of skeptical criticism is the trifling complaint (and it is often due to a misunderstanding) upon which a passage is rejected, and on the other hand the servile flattery with which some subjective or skeptical opinion is quoted.

If it be a question of knowledge, between the Old Testament writer and his modern critic, as to the events of those long-past days, we think

that the advantage would rest with the Old Testament writer. And if it should ever be a question as to scruple in regard to the use of earlier writings, in this too the critic has shown a recklessness and inconsistency oftentimes which has placed his work in unfavorable contrast with the exceeding reverence of the Old Testament writer.

Setting aside therefore human speculation, whether believing or unbelieving, let us listen with sympathetic interest to what the Old Testament has to say regarding God's attitude toward sinful man from the beginning, mercy if it is mercy, vengeance if it be vengeance.

It was "in the cool of the day," Gen. 3:8, that God approached man regarding his sin. There is a meaning in it. Divine consideration is manifest in the very time which was chosen to charge man with the sin which he could not overlook. God came to man not in the heat of the day, as some one (I think it is McChesney) has remarked, when man's "blood was up," when he might have added to his transgression by hasty intemperateness of reply. But he came to him in the (*ruahh*) "cool," literally the "wind" of the day, presumably the cool of

the evening—the evening, the friend of meditation, the hour of solemn deliberate decision, when men's thoughts run slow. The love of God forestalled the impetuosity of man. Thus the Old Testament teaches that from the first human sin, and onward, God took cognizance of sin, but that even in charging man with sin, God's considerateness was manifest.


The same is true when he drove man forth from the Garden lest he should "take also of the tree of life." Gen. 3: 22. At first thought the expulsion from Eden might seem to be vengeance, but on the contrary the reason annexed shows that it was the indispensable prerequisite of all effective mercy. It was "lest he should take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever." We have already seen that man in his sinless state was placed upon trial. The test was not to continue forever. This tree of life was that which would, in a limited time, have given permanence, fixity, to his sinlessness, if he had remained sinless for a limited time, if he had borne the test which was appointed him. But now that he has sinned, everything has become changed in its effect. That which before was a blessing, has now become a danger, just as the

wealth which is a blessing to the good man may be a curse to the depraved. To partake of this tree of life, now that his nature had become sinful, would have been to give fixity to that sinful nature. It would have rendered his regeneration impossible. Whatever variations of interpretation as to detail may be arrived at, there can be little doubt as to the great central teaching of the Old Testament here. Man's probation was not to be an endless one. Permanence of nature could be reached within a limited time; and the tree of life was the provision appointed for confirming man's nature in sinlessness if he remained sinless. But the awful alternative was that if he should sin, his sinful nature would likewise be confirmed and made permanent, if he were allowed to remain in the same circumstances. A provision which offered such untold advantage of good involved also the possibility of untold ill. To have continued to partake of this tree in his sinfulness, would have meant immortality in wickedness.

It was mercy therefore that drove him from the Garden, that altered this feature of his circumstances that his nature might not be irreversibly fixed in evil as yet, but that he might


be within the possibility of restoration, that he might be salvable still.

God's attitude toward the great sinner is well portrayed in his dealings with Cain. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well [hhattāth], sin [or a 'sin offering'] lieth at the door." Gen. 4:7. These words were spoken not so much as a warning against the consequences of sin if persisted in, as our Authorized Version renders it (though such a warning would have been merciful), but rather as a loving reminder of the opportunity for mercy. The word here translated "sin" may also be translated "sin offering" as it is so translated some one hundred times in the Books of Moses, *e. g.*, Lev. 4:21, "It is the sin offering for the congregation." Lev. 5:7, "One for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering," etc., etc. So that this passage, instead of warning Cain that if he did not do good his sin would lie like a beast of prey at the door of his tent, ready to seize him with its consequences, may perhaps more correctly be translated—"If thou doest not good, a sin offering lieth at the door." That is, even if he had done wrong, or would in the future do wrong, let him remember that God had appointed



a way of forgiveness, a sin offering was not far to seek, a provision had been made. Cain had been instructed, as had Adam and Abel, not only in regard to the offering from the soil, in thankful recognition of God as the God of nature and providence, but also in regard to the offering of a life, in penitent acknowledgment and for the forgiveness of sin.

It is a significant fact that Cain offered only that kind of sacrifice which was a recognition of God's providence: he did not offer that which would have been a confession of his own life-forfeiting sin. The sin offering was near at hand, but he did not offer it. There are many who would class themselves as Christian scholars, who yet would like to deny that the first man and his family had any such clear conception of sin. But the unbelief of men can never change the fact that this is the Old Testament teaching. And even if it were a matter of debate, why should it be thought suspicious that God should teach the first sinner something of the offensiveness of sin and of the way of forgiveness? How much larger and earlier is God's grace than the small theories of unbelief! We cannot be expected to give much space to what mere theories



have to say regarding God's attitude toward the sinner.

The same merciful attitude upon the part of God toward Cain, to keep the door of opportunity open, is expressed later. Cain having carried his sinful purpose into execution, became overwhelmed with a sense of fear or guilt. He gave vent to his feelings in the cry, as rendered in the Authorized Version, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." The word 'woni translated "my punishment" is commonly translated "my iniquity." It is so translated some forty times elsewhere in the Books of Moses and more than two hundred times in the Old Testament. So also the word rendered "bear," from a Hebrew root (*nāsā*) meaning to "lift up," was also one of the words commonly used to denote to lift up the face of another, or to "forgive." Hence another, and perhaps more exact translation of the passage is, "My iniquity is too great to be forgiven." If this was Cain's state of mind, there was hope. And God protected him from immediate violence and death at the hands of his fellow-men. He placed a mark upon Cain lest any one finding him might slay him. He gave him time for repentance. God's hand of

mercy intervened even on behalf of the murderer.

This was, according to the Old Testament teaching, God's attitude, not to the individual sinner alone as to Cain, but to sinful mankind in general. When "all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth," God said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man." Gen. 6:12, 3. Some intervention was imperatively necessary, and yet, how patient was God! In the above verse (Gen. 6:3) the word rendered to "strive," may also have the meaning to "be low" to "be humble," while the tripartite Hebrew word translated "in that also" is capable of an entirely different derivation which would mean rather "in their wandering away." In which case the meaning would be—"My spirit shall not be humbled forever in man, in their [or his] wandering away, he is [or has become] flesh." Although at first created and animated by the very Spirit of God, he had wandered away until another nature, a lower (or as it is frequently characterized in Scripture a "fleshly" or "carnal") nature had become dominant, and God's Spirit, both as creative and gracious, was humbled thereby.



Yet, notwithstanding all this, God was forbearing,—“his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.” Gen. 6 : 3. Interpreters have differed as to whether the “one hundred and twenty years” referred to the time which was to elapse before the Deluge, or to the maximum period of human life henceforth, after the Deluge. Probably the correct interpretation is, that in this, as in many Old Testament passages, there is a comprehensiveness of meaning embracing both. Not only would the race then living be given one hundred and twenty years longer to repent before the Deluge, but, when the race should begin anew, after the Deluge, the normal human lifetime would likewise be one hundred and twenty years. Wickedness so prevalent and defiant would be curtailed. For the elects’ sake, in the interests of salvation, those days were shortened. Nevertheless, although Deluge and death must come, how long-suffering! one hundred and twenty years! In wrath God remembered mercy. This, according to the Old Testament was God’s attitude toward the sinner.

Every new exhibition of man’s perversity became a new opportunity for God’s forbearance. When the race, or a considerable portion of it, had

planned to defeat the original purpose and command of God,—“replenish the earth, and subdue it,” they resolved that they would not migrate abroad over all the earth. To this intent they devised to build a lofty tower, a monument to their own self-will, a great central rallying signal which might be seen from afar,—“Let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.” Gen. 11 : 4. But God knew how much man needed the discipline which would come through nationalization and counternational effort. How merciful was the method which he adopted to thwart their plan of self-glorifying unity, and attain his purpose! He caused them to desist from their plan by “confounding” (the Hebrew word is to “make weak”) their language (literally “lip”) so that they might not understand one another’s speech. It is not the Hebrew word regularly used to denote “understand,” but the Hebrew word which means to “hear.” According to this passage the confusion was due, not to a difference of dialect spoken by the several workmen, not to a difficulty to understand each other (it is not the Hebrew word for “understand”) but to inability to make themselves heard. It may have been due

also to unintelligible dialect : that may be taught elsewhere, but not in this particular passage. It should be observed moreover that this passage does not teach, as some have thought, that the different languages, which subsequently arose in the human family, were the continuation and extension of the various languages, unintelligible to each other, which miraculously arose at this time. Such could have been : we have no reason to be jealous of miracles. But that is not what this passage says. It teaches no other confusion except that which arose from faintness or weakness of speech, which, with the accompanying fear which this loss of speech engendered, made it impracticable for them to continue to build, though it is not impossible that there was confusion of dialect also.

Indirectly of course the various languages of the earth were due to this incident, which caused them to desist from their centralizing plan, and allowed emigration to take its natural and divinely-ordered course, begetting in due time by continued separation differences of language. More directly, the multiplication of languages was due, according to this passage, to the separating of the people consequent upon the defeat of their

plan of centralization. The consequent emigrations, just as later emigrations, gave rise to varieties of language, as, *e. g.*, the English from the German. In all this, the Old Testament anticipates, or accords with, recognized philological principles as applied to ethnology to-day.

But what shall be said of God's mercy in the face of the so-called Old Testament doctrine of election? "And I will bless them that bless thee." Gen. 12: 3. Is it defensible? The first fact that we should remember in this connection is, that, whatever be the theological form in which men have cast this truth, or however it may appear to our view-point, it never meant arbitrariness on the part of God, who "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." After his own will, but according to counsel, never arbitrary. Whether the condition or reason be mentioned or not, there was reason, highest reason; it was not arbitrary but according to counsel. In the Old Testament the condition is frequently attached, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred . . . and I will make of thee a great nation." Gen. 12: 1, 2. But if the reason be not stated, *e. g.*, why God

loved Jacob but hated Esau, that would not prove that there was no reason.

We should remember also, that according to the Old Testament, the ungodly and the so-called Gentile world possessed the knowledge of God and his will, as did Abel and Noah and Abraham and the righteous in general. The considerable revelation, which God gave to Adam and Abel and Seth and their early kindred, was unquestionably repeated and taught by them to their descendants with varying success, and became knowledge common to all. The record in Genesis does not teach that the only time that God came down to converse with man was when he came to rebuke him. The record rather implies that God's visits had been frequent,—the man knew his approach. The knowledge thus imparted to man, perhaps during many years of his sinlessness, and even after, became the common heritage of the race. But sin was now also at work, and a pass had been reached in ungodliness where this common knowledge of God, and the bestowment of common blessings, had ceased to arrest the attention and call forth the worship of men, except in a few cases. It pleased God therefore to single out, with divine

reason of course, certain individuals and families for the reception of even greater blessings and larger revelation, so that by contrast, if in no other way, men might discern the difference "between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." In this plan, whether men like it or not, we see the only apparent means by which God could make his mercy effective to any considerable number of the human race. Common revelation and common blessings had ceased to be of much avail spiritually ; and special revelation and special blessing was the means used to supplement it, and turn, at least a remnant, to God.

In the heartless ejection of Hagar from the home of Abraham, God's part was merciful, the heartlessness belonged to the far-from-faultless Abraham and Sarah. The tenderness of God's attitude was shown in his appearing, not by an ordinary angel, but in the person of his Son (the "Angel of Jehovah" as he is frequently called in the Old Testament) at the well of the "Living One that seeth me." Ah ! did he, the blessed Saviour, recall this incident, when, nearly two thousand years later and "in the flesh," weary himself with his journey he met

that other outcast at another well, the well of Samaria, where, likewise for mercy's sake, he manifested a like omniscience? For she too said, "See a man, who told me all things that ever I did." Verily that well too might have been called Beer-lahai-roi—"the well of the Living One seeing me."

But God's mercy, so great, was yet discriminative. The modern clamor for nothing but the love of God, finds no support in the Old Testament. Sinful Sodom must be destroyed. Yet "peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city," Gen. 18 : 24, and even less, it would have been spared. To spare a wicked city, merely that its inhabitants might escape punishment, would not be mercy. There is a modern sumptuousness which confuses suffering with evil. Under certain circumstances suffering is as necessary to human well-being, as is exemption therefrom. The question here is not one of pleasure as against pain. It is a deeper and more spiritual one. It is between sin and holiness. The Old Testament teaching regarding God's mercy takes this lofty view-point. The salvation of those men of Sodom from sin was paramount. Mere physical pain was of little ac-

count, except as it affected this result. If it was impossible for the righteous leaven to work in that sinful mass, then like the Antediluvians, or like ancient Babylon or Canaan or Rome, though by a different process, it would be merciful and desirable to remove it. God's desire to spare (the Hebrew is "forgive") the city, looked especially to their salvation from their sin.

But is there not a difficulty in reconciling the attitude of God in the Old Testament toward Israel, with such statements as "and I will harden Pharaoh's heart"? Ex. 7: 3. Before entering upon this question let us remember that mercy in the highest sense cannot be such as would debar necessary punishment. If so, there could be no such thing as mercy. Let us admit frankly that there is a place for judgment, and that in the exercising of it mercy may not be outwardly prominent. God's mercy toward Pharaoh had been abundantly shown in the opportunities for repentance which he had repeatedly granted. Nevertheless the unqualified assertion that God "hardened Pharaoh's heart" requires an explanation, if God's attitude toward the sinner, according to the Old Testament, was mercy.

The explanation is found in the Old Testament itself. Every event, whether in the material or in the spiritual world, stands related not only to a "First cause," but also to an intermediate chain of events which we call "second causes." It is too late in the history of human thought to debate about the fact of these two kinds of so-called "causes." Every one admits the existence of both, though some may be reluctant to allow the First cause his proper name. But while there is no difference about admitting the fact of these two kinds of "causes," there is a vast difference of habit as to the emphasis which is placed upon the one or the other. Modern science and philosophy, which are specially conversant with the intermediate causes, the "secondary causes," the laws of nature, etc., naturally emphasize these more than did the ancients. In explaining a phenomenon, the modern scientist seldom goes back beyond these "secondary causes" though he knows that behind them is


"A flash of the Will that can;
Existent behind all laws—that made them,
And lo they are!"

On the other hand, the Jews, in common with

ancient peoples, who knew little about the working of so-called secondary causes, emphasized that which they did know, the origin and main-spring of all cause—God.

In accounting for the religious history of any one, the moderner emphasizes the secondary human influences, the Christian or antichristian forces which played upon him; while the Jew would perhaps omit all this, and emphasize the primary activity of God in the heart of the individual or his permitting sin to take its course. Progress in righteousness was ascribed to the help derived from God, not to the intermediate agencies. On the other hand by the same habit of expression, immorality and irreligion were often ascribed not to the secondary agencies, but to the attitude of God which permitted them.

But be it noted, the Old Testament believer never thought that this made God the author of evil, or freed the sinner from his own responsibility. His confession of sin so frequently recorded in the Old Testament, proves that this was merely the emphasis of statement, and that he was as clear as we are that God never actively encouraged any one to sin. If some scholars to-day are confused upon this point, the confusion



is their own: there was no confusion to the men of Old Testament times. They knew that God never positively hardened the heart of any men, but they also knew that if God withdrew his grace or ceased to actuate the man aright man's heart would be hardened. The withdrawal of his grace was a fundamental, though not responsible, cause of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. They took their own way of stating it, we take ours. Neither claims to state the complete cause. Thus when the Hebrew idiom is taken into account, God's "hardening of Pharaoh's heart" is just the sequel to God's forbearance repeatedly shown toward Pharaoh's disobedience.

Nothing requires to be said in evidence of God's merciful attitude toward his people in the wilderness. It is incomparably summed up by Moses in the Ninetieth Psalm, though a pardonable mistranslation mars its full expression in our English Version. In verse three, the Hebrew word *dākā*, which is there translated "destruction," and is generally understood to refer to the destruction of the body by death, is from a root meaning to "break in pieces," to "break fine," to "pulverize," and is therefore

frequently used to denote the breaking of man's stubborn self, to denote contrition, or repentance. It is the word which is used in Isa. 57: 15, "With him also that is of a 'contrite' and humble spirit." So in Ps. 34: 18, "And saveth such as be of a 'contrite' spirit." Likewise in this Ninetieth Psalm, the merciful purpose of God's dealings with Israel is more clearly expressed in a similar rendering of this word:—"Thou turnest man to contrition [or 'repentance,' not destruction] and sayest, Return [*i. e.*, to me], ye children of men." Above the sadness of the death lament of those homeless journeyers, doomed to fall in the wilderness before the company would reach the earthly Canaan, arose this song of faith, "We have a home," "Thou art our dwelling place." And even in this stern discipline, Moses discerned that God had a merciful purpose—to turn man to "contrition," "and sayest, Return, ye children of men."

From the entire historical writings of Moses it is very evident that from the beginning of man's sinfulness until the time of Moses, at least, it was well understood that God was willing to have mercy upon the sinner. That was his characteristic attitude. The more we look into these

early records, the more manifest is God's forbearance, the more tender and considerate do his purpose and his dealings appear. Assuredly, if men of our day have pictured to themselves the countenance of the God of old as storm-cast and threatening toward the children of men, they have not read it here. From his coming to Adam in the "cool of the day" until his loving appeal in this lofty psalm, the spirit, if not the words that come from the open door of God's compassion is ever, "Return, ye children of men."

But what shall be said of God's attitude as reflected in Old Testament laws, moral and ceremonial? As we hear the saint of old exclaim, "How love I thy law!" we are reminded that law had a different significance in his day. Many words have undergone a change of meaning. The now undesirable term "pagan" once had the honorable meaning of "villager." "Law," has now to many, perhaps to most men, a forbidding meaning. The very opposite was its original meaning, a meaning which it retained, in large measure, throughout the Old Testament. The Hebrew word *torah*, "law," is from a root which in this Hiphil or causative

form, means "to show," "to point out," etc. The original significance of law was guidance, instruction. As a kind parent would give instruction for the guidance of his unknowing or thoughtless child, so God, in his mercy, gave laws to man to aid him, to guide him if he would accept guidance. Had man always used these laws for this kindly purpose, "law" would never have acquired another and forbidding meaning. But through generations of wrongdoing, man transgressed these laws, thereby bringing evil upon himself. He took up another attitude than was intended toward these laws, until, in their counter relation to him, they too came to have an altered significance, until the most prominent conception connected with the idea of "law" became its retaliating consequences, not its kindly guidance.

Added to this, the monstrous iniquity of the Greek and Roman world, as it dashed against the barriers of law (less perfect it is true) of that day, made the idea of prohibition and punishment the dominant, almost the exclusive, conception of law. It was in this altered sense that it was used generally, though not exclusively, in the New Testament. But in the beginning,

largely in the Old Testament, the conception of law was guidance, not prohibition. As our Lord interpreted the fourth commandment as intended for "mercy and not sacrifice," so we should interpret not only all of the Ten Commandments, but also all the laws given by Moses, moral and even ceremonial. They were intended to separate men from the habits of the world, and school them in higher life and faith. If we keep in mind this original and prevailingly Old Testament conception of law, we will not be in danger of seeking for harshness where it was not intended, and we shall the better understand how the believer of old could say, "How love I thy law!" That unbelievers and transgressors should not love it, must cause no surprise.

In the Old Testament record, which recounts the events of the conquest of Canaan, the degenerate days of the judges and the stormy days of the early kingdom, we must be careful not to make these Historical Books stand sponsor for the iniquity of men, or justify their cruelty. We must never make the actual life of even believers the measure of God's teaching. Few men are as good as their creed. The lives of Christians to-day do not adequately reflect what the New

Testament teaches of God's mercy. Nor must we be surprised that God in his providence employed human agents so imperfect and unsanctified as Samson and Jephthah. Had he not employed these, he would have employed worse, or none. He makes use of very imperfect agents still, in the preserving of his church and in the saving of sinners. But this rather magnifies God's mercy, without justifying the faults of his agents. The persistent disobedience of Israel in not thoroughly conquering the land, their making compromise with the idolatrous people, their general neglect of the divinely appointed ceremonies which had been given to them on their way, all resulting in their decline into semi-heathenism, only magnify the more, God's mercy in retaining them in his favor at all. He seizes upon every element of good in Israel, however imperfect, that he may foster it and make it an occasion of blessing, even a Samson and a Jephthah.

When, as a people, Israel rejected God's rule, and desired an earthly king, he spake through Samuel,—“They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me.” 1 Sam. 8:7. Yet he said, “Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that

they say unto thee." He did not reject them. On the contrary, as you follow the narrative how great was his forbearance, with Saul, with David, with Solomon! Above the din of battle in those stormy days, you hear the clear accents of God's love that would not leave man to himself. In every lull of the strife his mercy appears. So that, so far from the record of those rude and apostate days representing God as an unrelenting despot, it really magnifies his mercy.

Sometimes the mercy of God toward sinful man is not so much asserted as implied. This was the conception of God which lay behind the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the Temple. "What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house: then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive." 1 Kings 8: 38, 39.

The records of the events of the divided kingdom and the messages of the pre-exilic prophets, reveal among others this great fact,—that it was hard for God to resign the sinner to his sin, even the most ungrateful. Listen to the message of Hosea! Where is there elsewhere such an

expression of Divine compassion, except the Saviour's prayer, "Father, forgive them?" Even the stern declaration of doom by Amos is accompanied with its message of mercy. "And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel." Amos 9: 14. "Seek ye me, and ye shall live." Amos 5: 4. Indeed it may be said to be characteristic of Old Testament prophecy that, however severe its denunciation of sin, it never left man there. Before the voice of the prophet ceased he ever announced the mercy of God. These very declarations of mercy, which are found side by side with his stern denunciation of sin, and which many too hastily reject as interpolations inconsistent with the body of the prophecy or narrative, are really its crowning complement. The critic frequently sees only one thing, while the Old Testament writer saw two,—God's hatred of sin, and his loving desire to save the sinner. Isaiah, although intensely sensitive to the enormity of the sin of his day, yet believed that the door of mercy still swung open: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet," etc. Isa. 1: 18. Jeremiah felt that before the sinful multitude of his day, there was not only

the way of death, but also, "I have set before you the way of life." Jer. 21 : 8. And in the land of exile, Ezekiel with great clearness proclaimed the truth, that the fate of the sinner was not irrevocably fixed. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Ezek. 33 : 11. Nor will any one miss this same truth in the post-exilic utterances of Zechariah and Malachi.

It is oftentimes in the undesigned expressions of devotion that men reflect most correctly their belief. For this reason the Book of Psalms has a doctrinal value far beyond its strictly didactic statements. The great penitential psalms would be a mockery, apart from the mercy of God. Sometimes even here it is definitely asserted, "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy." Psalms 103 : 8. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth," etc. Psalms 103 : 13. How often the invocation, "Have mercy upon me," and how frequent the refrain, "His mercy endureth forever" !

Throughout these references to the mercy of God, as taught in the Old Testament, it will be

observed that it was a mercy which looked toward deliverance from sin. Sometimes it would bring evident deliverance from physical ills, as virtue and happiness often run parallel, but it is mercy looking to deliverance, not so much from suffering, as from sin. It was the "plague of his own heart." It was "Though your sins be as scarlet." It was "Have mercy upon me . . . my sin is ever before me."

But it may be objected, Was it after all a world-wide mercy for the sinful? Was it not for Israel only? And was it not for even Israel collectively, rather than individually? As to the last, there is, in the very constitution of society, a community of good as well as a community of evil, and many blessings were shared by all Israel in general because of the virtues of the faithful even though they were sometimes very few. The presence of ten righteous would have meant temporary immunity to the whole population of Sodom. Yet in the last analysis mercy looking to salvation from sin, was always restricted to "those that fear him." Old Testament mercy was collective only in a reflex way, and in the same sense that New Testament mercy is collective. Men of old as men of to-

day are prone to take shelter in it, though it was never intended for that purpose. It is this mistake exactly which Ezekiel sought to correct. "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Ezek. 18:20. This was not a new teaching in Ezekiel's day. It is essentially the same as that announced to Cain. "If thou doest well is there not forgiveness?" etc. The fact that men to-day rely upon a kind of collective mercy, does not prove that it is the teaching of the New Testament, except in a reflex sense. Neither did the similar mistake of men of old prove that the Old Testament taught a collective mercy looking toward forgiveness of sin.

As to whether or not, this mercy was for Israel only, it was of course to Israel only on the condition of their receiving it, and how often they thrust it from them or defeated its purpose, their history sadly tells. The offer of mercy was to the Israelite especially, because, with all his indifference, he hearkened more than others. The condition upon which he obtained mercy for his

sin was exactly the same condition upon which all mankind likewise could have had it. The offer of mercy to the Israelite did not withdraw it from the Gentile.

On the contrary the giving of mercy explicitly to Israel, was linked to their making it known to the whole world. From the time of Abraham onward it was proclaimed to be God's purpose, that "all nations should be blessed." Before the time of Abraham this question could not have been raised; there was hitherto no nationally separated people of God. But after the time of Abraham, *i. e.*, as soon as the question of national discrimination could be raised, it was definitely announced to be God's purpose to show mercy in the bestowal of spiritual blessing upon all nations. The announcement of this world-wide mercy of God would, of course, be made through the instrument which he has always seen fit to choose, namely those who have already accepted his mercy, a very imperfect instrument indeed, yet the best at hand, the Christian church to-day, the Israelitish church then.

Right here is the reason why more was not said to Israel regarding the promise of mercy to the whole world. The low level of Israel's

spirituality and the inconsistency and hypocrisy of their own lives forbade it. To have commissioned often rebellious and apostate Israel to emphasize this offer of mercy to the Gentiles (though it could not be altogether withheld), would have called forth resentment in the Gentile, and self-righteous deception in the Israelite. Israel needed to learn this lesson herself more thoroughly, before she could go forth to teach it to others. It would have been ill-timed to have said much at that particular time to the people of Israel, about declaring God's mercy to the world. It would, at many periods of their history, have been like addressing an audience of hardened hypocrites to-day, and flattering them by urging them to go out to warn the debauched or the heathen. Little could be said through Israel to the Gentile or even regarding the Gentile, until the Israelite himself evidenced a genuineness and stability of spiritual life. Nor was there any other possible medium better than Israel. With all their faults the descendants of Abraham obeyed partially the call of God, while other peoples, with apparently rare exceptions, utterly disregarded God. Under these circumstances, the universality of God's mercy, and his announcement of it so far

as possible, is the more wonderful. The limitation of God's mercy regarding the Gentiles is only apparent. It was limited, to the Gentile as to the Israelite, only by unbelief. From the beginning of human sin, God's mercy as we have seen has flowed with a world-wide stream for all who would receive it. According to the Old Testament as we have traced its teaching, this mercy was not hidden for long ages, nor was it lost in the mass, for "unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work," nor was it limited to one nation as the modern poet has sung it, "There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea."

"There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea."

IV

THE PLACE OF MESSIAH IN OLD TESTAMENT SALVATION

WE have now arrived at a point of difference. Up to this point the several factors in the Old Testament problem of salvation have been essentially the same as the corresponding factors in the New Testament:—Sin was the same, in its nature, and in its effects, less varied and less extreme as yet perhaps, but essentially the same. God's attitude toward sin and the sinner was essentially the same as in the New Testament, with this necessary consequence, that in the "days of their ignorance" responsibility and punishment were less. God was unrelenting to none, but merciful to all, manifesting his mercy especially toward those who availed themselves of it, a mercy looking to their salvation from sin. And in that early time some men of the mass of mankind were saved. The question unavoidably arises, What place did the Messiah occupy in the salvation of those men of old? Redeemed men now, have One whom they emphatically

regard as their Saviour, whom they regard as essential to their salvation, through whom they have redemption : whose life and death in some way made provision for their pardon and restoration : who occupies a foremost place in their salvation. What position did the Messiah occupy in the plan of salvation which is taught in the Old Testament, and through which men of old were saved ?

It will not do to begin by pointing to the announcements of a vicarious Sufferer far down the ages, *e. g.*, by Isaiah, even if his identification then were undisputed. For, as we have seen, there was some way of salvation known and effective from the time of Abel and onward. Nor must we now read back into Old Testament passages a New Testament meaning which was unknowable and unpracticable for men of that day. As a part of Christological study we may profitably do that ; but in seeking to know what the Old Testament taught the sinner of its day, as to how he might be saved from his sin, we must view that teaching rather from his standpoint. The older theologians made much of "types" in the Old Testament, as shadowing forth the coming and work of Christ. The New

Testament writers place very much emphasis upon the fact that Christ fulfilled these types, but in doing so they seem to teach that Christ had shed so much new light upon these types, as to imply that heretofore, to themselves at least, they had contained comparatively little redemptive information.

Let us leave aside the theories of "the schools" as to "the Messiah's" place in Old Testament salvation, and see exactly what the Old Testament itself teaches upon this question.

The earliest passage which bears upon it, and a passage which therefore must be of initial importance in interpreting the meaning of other succeeding passages, is Gen. 3: 15, wherein God in speaking to the Tempter said, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thy head,"—not a very detailed statement of anything, disappointing in its indefiniteness. And yet two facts must be kept in mind,—First, that in other interviews with our first parents, God doubtless had given much supplementary information, which the necessarily brief statements of Scripture do not preserve, and secondly, that predictive prophecy was necessarily obscure,

otherwise it would have defeated its own purpose, it would have had no justification for its having been announced at all, and the events themselves withheld: if it were to be made entirely explicit, there might rather have been brought to pass its fulfillment at once.

But what did this statement mean, coming at the particular time when it did? That the Tempter (whose head the seed of the woman was to bruise) was not the literal serpent, but a more powerful and spiritual agency, seems to be placed beyond doubt, by the importance attached to him in this passage, and is confirmed by the uniform teaching of other Scripture regarding that old serpent the devil. On the other hand, it is equally clear from this passage, that a literal serpent was the visible agent used to suggest disobedience. Had no such visible agent of the evil one been used, our first parents might have confused this unseen actor with God himself.

Some modern scholars even, with the complete Old Testament before them, have been confused upon the question of the distinction between God and Satan. This much is plain, that man had become sinful, by yielding to temptation to

disobey God, a temptation which had been presented by a Tempter under the pretext of his being interested in man's larger good. But the Tempter, upon the one hand, was not thus to be allowed to gain a friendship. That would have been fatal to man. He rather aroused an antagonism. On the other hand, man was not to be able immediately to reverse entirely his folly and defeat and sin. When accomplished it would be, not by the first human pair, but by their "seed." The final outcome is summed up in the brief statement that the seed of the woman would finally bruise the head or vital power of the Tempter.

Any right exegesis of this passage must not lose sight of the historical circumstances. The meaning of this promise must be taken in the light of the catastrophe which called it forth. That must have been the relation in which it was first understood, and the commentary by which it was ever afterwards explained. The outstanding event which had made this promise either necessary or useful, was, that man had sinned, had sinned being tempted, had fallen spiritually, had sinned. The only interpretation of this promise, then, which is to the point, is

one which makes it deal with sin, and with man as a sinner, and to some extent with the Tempter who had tempted man. It was, in some way, a promise of the reversal of this new condition of man, as sinful, a promise of a restoration from this sinful state into which he had fallen. A promise, necessarily vague as to the method of its fulfillment, but none the less positive as to its certainty and result. It was by the "seed of the woman," that the Tempter was to be overcome, that his head was to be bruised.

But whom did our first parents and their immediate descendants understand to be meant by the "seed of the woman"? What could this reasonably have meant to them? Later Messianic passages, if they refer to this same Deliverer, are helpful and definitive for us; the adaptation of historical events to the Messianic plan may throw light upon Messianic teaching now: many later so-called Messianic passages, although not really announcements of new information regarding a coming One, were nevertheless witnesses to an already existing hope of a Deliverer, a hope which many will believe had its origin in this promise of the "seed of the woman."

Apart, however, from these later teachings, whether to the point or not, who was understood by the "seed of the woman," in this passage before us, and at that time, by our first parents?

Undoubtedly it was in their understanding to be some one born of woman, and in that sense like themselves, human. But one of the first teachings which emerges here is that this "some one" was not, even to them, merely human. Doubtless to them, as to the later saints and prophets, it was far from being entirely clear. Was it their descendants collectively who were to crush the Tempter? Yet the promise meant something to them. Perhaps their own belief regarding the "personnel" of this "seed of the woman" who was to deliver them, is best expressed in a passage in the succeeding chapter, in connection with the birth of their son. "I have gotten a man Jehovah." Gen. 4: 1. The meaning of this verse depends upon the rendering of the Hebrew word *eth*, which in our Authorized Version is translated "from" and which the Revised Version translates "with" and supplies for the sake of the idiom "the help of"; neither of which translations is literal. This

Hebrew word has very commonly a very different usage; it is frequently used merely as a sign to denote that that which follows is grammatically a direct definite object; it is then a word without any English translation; it then does not require any word in the English translation to represent it.

Taking the word in this usage the translation of the verse would simply be, "I have gotten a man (viz.), Jehovah." It is used in this latter sense fifteen times in this same chapter, in several of which cases also, as here, it precedes a proper name. In the face of this it is not easy to see how anything except the boldness and abruptness of the idea could have led the translators of either the Authorized or the Revised Version to make the departure which they have from this literal rendering. And yet after all is the idea too bold? A great promise had been made to our first parents, that the "seed of the woman" should bruise the head of the Tempter; they had had time to bemoan their disobedience, to realize the power and tenaciousness of sin.

We may believe they longed to be back again, free from the dominion of evil. They had had time to meditate what type or status of being



this promised Deliverer, this seed of the woman would be. They had realized now, doubtless, if not before, that he would necessarily be greater than themselves, for they knew their own inability. God had already appeared to them, presumably as he did later to the Old Testament saints, to Abraham and others, in human form. Hence when the child was born to our first parents, he might, in the light of all this, and in the light of that unspeakably important but very indefinite promise of a Deliverer, seem to them to fulfill these conditions, the seed of the woman yet more than man. And with their limited vocabulary he was in some sense both man and God, "a man, Jehovah." In her mistaken identification, with less of verbiage than the Nicene Fathers, Eve expressed in her hope and faith a profound truth regarding the dual nature of the Saviour to come. But more to our point here, this unstudied utterance of Eve, like many a clumsy statement, told her real understanding regarding this promised Deliverer. Possibly there is a similar belief voiced by the pious Lamech in Genesis 5:28, when he called the name of his son "Noah" ("rest"), expressing his hope that now, at length, the promised

"seed" had come to give man rest from the curse of sin.

Later prophecies defined more exactly the character and work of this promised Deliverer making use of many different names to emphasize the different phases of his character and work. But, be it remembered, Abel and his successors in faith did not require to wait for an effective plan of salvation. All that was essential to their salvation must have been embraced in this early teaching. And why not? The increasing definiteness of the Old Testament prophecies regarding the Messiah, were not so much essential to the salvation of the individual sinner, but rather preparatory for his advent, and for his identification when the time of his coming should be fulfilled. Nor are even the still greater light and details of the New Testament essential, in this sense, to salvation. Many humble-minded believers to-day are saved with very little understanding of these details. So far as explicit knowledge about the person of Christ, or the questions involved in atonement, are concerned, they have little if any information more than the Old Testament believer. Even the most enlightened believer is still much in ignorance re-

garding the fulness of things. There has been a sliding scale as to knowledge of details, especially of Christ's nature and person. But a specific knowledge of these has not been an essential of personal salvation. The essentials have been from the beginning made known, and are contained in this first promise, illumined in the first place perhaps by oral explanation or teaching, which has not been preserved. Man had become a sinner, but God's mercy kept open the way of return, and here was immediately the promise of a Deliverer, little more than a bare promise, and yet a Deliverer who our first parents considered would be more than human. This promise was as certain of fulfillment as the character of God who gave it was unchangeable. What difference did it make, that men as yet did not possess its details? The believer to-day has not learned its heights and depths. He was to be a deliverer from sin, for sin was the circumstance which called forth the promise: the guarantee of Jehovah was upon it; what more was essential!

A question may be raised as to how far the individual character of the Deliverer was preserved in later promises, *e.g.*, in the promise as renewed in several forms to Abraham. For the

word for "seed," notwithstanding Paul's pointed and valid distinction between the singular and the plural, is frequently used as a collective in the Hebrew Scriptures. We must, however, take into account the fact that our first parents, as we have seen, understood the Deliverer as individual, that this individualistic idea had probably prevailed, and had been handed down among the faithful, so that Abraham also inherited that view. When God saw well to make a certain portion of mankind the special messengers and custodians of his truth, when he called out Abraham and set him apart to found a believing nation as such, there was naturally an emphasis placed upon the intermediate part which he and his descendants, as a nation or church, should perform in this deliverance, or in the bringing in of this Deliverer. This emphasis did not at all exclude the idea that the Deliverer would in the end be, not the intermediate nation, but an individual. Just as Isaiah uses the term "Servant of Jehovah," sometimes to denote the individual Messiah, and sometimes to denote the chosen people in coöperative service with him, so the "seed of Abraham," although "one seed," had both an individual and a collective usage.

But it is very evident that the descendants of Abraham had a part in the deliverance only upon the ground and presumption of their relation to the individual Deliverer, concerning whom it had already been promised, that he would bruise the head of the Tempter. If there had been no "servant of Jehovah" in the sense of an individual Messiah, the nation would not have been the "servant of Jehovah" in a collective and intermediate sense. And if there had been no "seed of the woman" in the sense of an individual Saviour, the seed of Abraham would not have accomplished its intermediate work, the salvation or "blessing" of all nations.

That this Deliverer and blessing as thus anew promised to the world through the seed of Abraham were, in the first place, spiritual, rather than material, is evident. That was the characteristic in which Abraham was distinguished from other men of his time. It is not to the point to say that the scribes and Pharisees of our Lord's day understood it differently, for they were rebuked for their misunderstanding and perversion of it. Our Lord's reproof, if we may refer to it, implied that the correct teaching of the Old Testament

was that the deliverance was to be a spiritual deliverance.

Here then was a promise from earliest times, guaranteeing to man a Deliverer from sin. A study of later Messianic passages only confirms and elucidates this first promise, sometimes by implying or assuming that some such ground of faith had already been made known, and sometimes by defining more exactly the character and work of the promised Deliverer as both human and divine, in consistence with this first promise.

Omitting doubtful passages, and those which voice the Messianic hope in only a general way, there are many passages, which, if they mean anything at all, give promise anew of this Deliverer from sin, from incidental ills also, but from sin. These give more specific information regarding himself and his work.

The exact conception which the Old Testament had of the dignity of the person of this Deliverer, is not easily stated. This much, however, is clear, that in keeping with the first promise, he is conceived of as more than merely human. This is expressed in the relation which he occupies toward Jehovah. He is partner with Jehovah in contrast to "kings of the earth"

who take counsel against Jehovah and against his Anointed. Ps. 2 : 2. Or in Ps. 2 : 7 (as confirmed by Heb. 1 : 5), he is the eternally begotten Son of God. In Ps. 2 : 8, he is described as a king who is to have world-wide dominion. "I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." In gaining this dominion he would have the sanction and support of Jehovah, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Ps. 110 : 1. Moreover, he would conquer the headship of evil, the Tempter. "He shall wound the heads over many countries [or, over a wide region]," Ps. 110 : 6, alluding probably to the promised bruising of the head of the Tempter as recorded in Gen. 3 : 15.

The representations of his dignity are frequently stated in such a connection as to show that this dignity was not regarded as incompatible with his being the "seed of the woman," *i. e.*, with his humanity. When he is called "Wonderful," "Counsellor," "Mighty God," "Everlasting Father," "Prince of Peace," he is likewise, in the same verse, spoken of as a "child to be born." Isa. 9 : 6.

It is not to the point to say that this must

have been meaningless contradiction to the Old Testament reader. The New Testament believer is asked to accept a similar difficulty in the union of Christ's two natures, divine and human, omniscient and limited, in one Person. It is indeed still, the "mystery of godliness: God manifest in the flesh." The evangelical Christian should raise no objection to this feature of the Old Testament representation of the Messiah; he should welcome it.

Many of those passages which represent the superhuman dignity and nature of the Promised One in the Old Testament, have been much misunderstood. The mistake has been twofold:— There has been an excessive zeal upon the part of many scholars to eliminate the superhuman from the Old Testament conception of the Deliverer promised. There has been a failure to comprehend the bearing of earlier, and especially this first promise, upon the meaning of later references to him.

If the Old Testament hearer had not already possessed and believed the first promise of "the seed of the woman," he might indeed have been puzzled to know to whom those later prophecies referred. But, with the first promise known and

believed, he watched for every ray of light, and discerned it, even though from other angles. He eagerly treasured every new representation of the Messiah's nature or his work, begrudging him neither the human nor the divine. Human terminology, such, *e. g.*, as "king" had, of necessity, to be used to describe certain phases of his work. But there was no misunderstanding in the mind of the believer, especially when his kingship was described in terms of world-wide rulership, or other characteristics inapplicable, even in Jewish hyperbole, to any mere human ruler. We still continue to call him our "King." But when we do so we expect that, without further explanation, men who have scriptural knowledge, will understand us.

Not only did the Old Testament represent his kingly office as more than human, but it likewise conceived of him as possessing a no less unique priesthood. "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek," Ps. 110:4, one who received his priesthood, not from the Levitical line of succession, but in some other way, afterwards to be more fully revealed, a unique priesthood, of original appointment. Without using the word "priest" he is frequently

represented in the Old Testament as independently initiating intercessory or priestly work. This is true of the so-called "theophanies" of the Old Testament, where he appears as "the Angel of Jehovah." "Then the Angel of Jehovah answered and said, O Jehovah of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah?" etc. Zech 1: 12.

Here again, although the Old Testament represented him now as "King" and now as "Priest," it conceived of no necessary difficulty in his uniting these or even other attributes. On the contrary, it explicitly affirms the union of the kingly and the priestly office in him. "And he shall be a priest upon his throne," and this without conflict; "and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." Zech. 6: 13. The same truth is expressed in the symbolical act of crowning the high priest Joshua, as a type or forerunner of the "Branch," one of the well-known designations of the Promised One to represent his lowly human relation. The two outstanding functions of the Saviour were increasingly emphasized—his Kingship and his Priesthood. Each was gradually revealed more fully, "line upon line" according as the religious education and

experience of the Old Testament Church, made it practicable. The first idea, that of Rulership or Kingship, was very evidently implied in the first promise. Gen. 3: 15. If he were to bruise the head of the Tempter, he must be armed with power. He must gain rule.

The second idea would not be so patent at first. But very soon man must have realized that more than mere power and conquest was needed, that sin needed atonement, that sin needed sacrifice, that the sinner needed intercession. The sinner needed not only a king to subdue the Tempter, but he needed also a priest to intercede for him. As priest to intercede he must have a sacrifice. The first human family had been taught enough to appreciate this. Abel offered his sacrifice. It had some meaning, some meaning related to the great catastrophe which had befallen man, some relation to sin. So, in time, and in a manner as clear as was compatible with the purpose of prophecy, he is represented as being his own sacrifice. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Isa. 53: 5. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,

yet he opened not his mouth : he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter." Isa. 53:7. It is difficult to see how these two outstanding features of the Saviour, as we now know him, could in the ages before his incarnation have been more wisely revealed, more appropriately blended, so that neither idea would suffer from the emphasis placed upon the other, and so that men might both have the hope of his kingly power to conquer evil, and at the same time (in that hope of conquest) remember that sin committed required more than conquest,—required atonement.

There was, then, according to the Old Testament teaching, from the beginning of man's career as a sinner, a promise of a Deliverer from sin. With unique consistency it preserves as it unfolds the twofold nature of this Deliverer, the human and the superhuman, the divine-human; though it makes no effort to explain how these would or could be united in one person. Parallel with this revealing of his twofold nature, is an increasing revelation of his twofold, perhaps manifold, work, kingly and priestly. Some have thought that there is a direct reference to his prophetic work in Deut. 18:15. "The Lord thy God will raise up unto

thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me [Moses]; unto him ye shall hearken." This however probably refers to the succession of inspired leaders whom God would from time to time raise up, after Moses should have passed away, rather than to the individual Messiah; that God would not leave his people without supernatural instruction, but would give them a prophet from time to time, to reveal to them with certainty his will. It refers to Christ it is probably only indirectly, as the completion of that line of teachers.

But omitting passages of doubtful interpretation it will be observed by every one that in the various statements in which the essentials of the promise of a Deliverer are renewed the emphasis varies. In different announcements it is placed upon different features of this deliverance.

The reasons for these differences cannot be narrowly accounted for by the passing historical events, nor by the political character of the period in which these prophecies are supposed to have been first spoken. Every prophecy had, of course, an application to its own time. But much arbitrary interpretation has arisen from a narrow application of this principle. The Old

Testament teaching was larger than the age which gave it birth. As Professor Robertson has put it, "The Old Testament prophets were not only 'men of their time,' but 'men above their time,' and also 'men for all time.'"¹ So we may say of their message. Its application to its own day was oftentimes the lesser part by far of its purpose. A prophecy regarding the promised Deliverer may or may not have had a special application to the age in which it was first announced. The main purpose of it was not transient, but abiding. Its immediate value, whatever it might be, was dependent upon this more abiding meaning. It is like the banker's securities. Their present value is dependent upon their having a future value; if they will be worth nothing to-morrow, they are worth little to-day.

Neither can the date of a prophecy regarding the Messiah be mechanically determined by the fullness of the revelation which it contains. It is true there is, in a general way, an unfolding "from more to more." But not even the human agency in prophecy would be so mechanically ordered. Men of most ripened knowledge often

¹ *The Old Testament and its Contents*, p. 85.

return to study and to state anew the most elementary truths. The philosopher of to-day repeats, in different form, the teachings of two thousand years ago. Hegel repeats Plato.

But especially, the Spirit of God, in prophecy, was not mechanically controlled; but worked "how and where and when" he would, the theories of confident men to the contrary, notwithstanding. Even Delitzsch¹ falls into this mistake and seeks to decide the date of certain prophecies by the fullness of the Messianic idea which they contain. It is only in a general way, that the later promises can be known to be late by reason of their containing a more advanced or detailed representation of the Messiah. Even, then, this increased detail does not so much add to the sufficiency of the original promise of a Deliverer from sin, but makes more definite his nature and work, and especially prepares for his advent. The original promise, that the "seed of the woman" would bruise the head of the Tempter, contained all that was essential. Upon that promise Abel, and doubtless very many others, were saved.

Many so-called Messianic passages are at

¹ *Messianic Prophecy*, Eng. Trans., pp. 215-223.

first sight disappointing, and if they stood alone would not severally teach, beyond doubt, that a unique, divine-human Messiah, was the hope of the Old Testament. This is true of many references to him in the later and even post-exilic prophets. And yet is not this, in some sense, a testimony to the existence of such a belief, that it was not unknown or doubtful; that it had already been taught in some prior promise? For example, when in Zech. 3 : 8, the prophet, speaking for God, says, "Behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch," it is assumed that there is no necessity to explain who is meant. It was he who filled the hopes of all Old Testament believers. He had been so often referred to, that further identification was unnecessary. Or in Mal. 3 : 1, "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple," etc. There was but one, whom, from the days of Adam, they had been looking forward to,—“The Lord, whom ye seek.” It is not the Hebrew word which is, in our Authorized Version, commonly translated “Lord”; but which would more correctly be translated, “Jehovah.” It is the word *ādhōn*, “lord,” which denotes

a superior or ruler, either human or divine, and is here fitly used to designate the divine-human Lord or Messiah. Many of the Messianic passages of the Old Testament therefore are allusions or references, rather than new or independent promises. To have formally introduced him repeatedly, who was already so generally known, would have been superfluous and inappropriate. And although long promised and known, he was yet but very vaguely conceived.

But it will still be asked, What place exactly did this promised Deliverer (as the Old Testament conceived of him) occupy in the Old Testament believer's salvation? What practical part did this One, promised, and repromised, and looked forward to with expectancy, actually fulfill in the plan of salvation, by which men were saved from sin in Old Testament times?

It is very evident, that in these earlier days, when as yet very little had been revealed concerning the person of this Deliverer, or of the exact character of his work, he could serve very little as the object of the believer's conscious faith. To Jehovah, who knew all things, he could be, as completely as now, the ground upon which the penitent sinner might be pardoned.

But to the sinner himself, he was, as yet, too vaguely revealed to be the object of explicit faith. This explains why the Old Testament represents the believer as putting his trust not so much in this promised Deliverer or his work, but rather in the Promiser, Jehovah himself. "Abraham . . . believed in Jehovah; and he counted it to him for righteousness." Gen. 15 : 6. It was upon the mercy of Jehovah that the sinner of old cast himself, rather than upon the vicarious work which Messiah would accomplish,—“Remember, O Jehovah, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Jehovah.” Ps. 25 : 6, 7. We do not mean that the vicarious work of Messiah was not taught at all in the Old Testament, for we read, “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” It was the idea underlying all Old Testament animal sacrifice for sin. But it did not occupy the place in the sinner's pardon which the Saviour's accomplished work now does, in the thought of the New Testa-

ment believer. As the Old Testament believer omitted secondary causes in accounting for any phenomenon, and attributed it to the great First cause, so in the matter of his pardon, he went directly to the great Promiser, Jehovah himself. The Old Testament taught most emphatically the fact, that Jehovah wished to pardon and save the sinner, but it taught the sinner less clearly the means by which this could or would be effected. From the promise in Gen. 3: 15, and throughout, it taught, that in some way salvation would be effected by a Deliverer born of the human race; and who yet, as we have seen, was regarded from the beginning, and henceforth with increasing definiteness, as more than merely human.

But this Deliverer, although thus an essential factor in man's deliverance from sin, and although his actual advent was looked forward to with great expectancy, was not what we may call the object of their faith. The Old Testament believer placed his faith in the mercy of Jehovah, and left it to him as to how his mercy would make use of Messiah to effect his pardon and salvation. This is only a step removed however from the position of the New Testament believer, when he places his faith in Christ, and

leaves it with him to make his intercession effectual.

When the Messiah actually came, and performed his atoning work, it made the acceptance of him, or faith in him, occupy a consciously decisive place in the plan of salvation. The early disciples and the apostles felt the abruptness of the change. That which in the Old Testament had been the largely unknown ground of the sinner's pardon, now became the object of his conscious faith. In the old Testament the sinner was drawn and saved, without the moral or personal influence of the character and work of the Messiah, in the sense in which these are emphasized to-day. Nevertheless he did occupy a real place in the plan of salvation then. His promised work, although yet indefinitely comprehended by men, was the ground upon which Jehovah pardoned and restored the sinner. He was, to the believer himself an object of constant expectancy, which kept alive his hope and pledged the certainty of his final deliverance from sin.

But more than this. He was the reality (dimly apprehended by many), reflected in their sacrificial offerings for sin. But it is doubtful if

even their most definite knowledge of him made him to any of them a conscious object of saving faith, but rather made his identification complete when he came and dwelt among men.

V

JEHOVAH, THE GOD OF REDEMPTION

THE view which the Old Testament believer had of his own salvation is inseparably connected with his conception of "Jehovah." His conception of Jehovah, as the New Testament reader's conception of Christ, determined more than anything else, except his own sin, the question of his salvation. What his conception of Jehovah was, is to be learned from his habitual usage of that name. The etymology of a name is one thing, but its practical meaning may be quite another. It is the usage of a name which reflects its practical meaning. It is not to be wondered at, that the believer of old, as the Christian of to-day, had several names with which to denote the all-comprehensive Deity, different designations, to be used according to the particular characteristic or work of God which was intended to be emphasized.

These several names of God in the Old Testament are not adequately distinguished, in our

Authorized English version, nor even in the ordinary Revised Version.

One of these names of God, and the one which we first meet with is "Elohim," generally rendered in our English versions simply, "God," but which we may refer to in the following pages more definitely as, "Elohim." A cursory examination of the passages in which this name occurs reveals, in general, its meaning, its usage:—"Elohim created the heavens and the earth." Gen. 1 : 1. It was the Spirit of "Elohim" who "moved [brooded] upon the face of the waters." Gen. 1 : 2. It was "Elohim" who said, "Let there be light." Gen. 1 : 3. And so it was "Elohim" who, as it is recorded throughout the first chapter of Genesis, performed the several days' work of Creation. "Elohim" completed in the seventh day "his work which he had made." Gen. 2 : 2. So, as we shall have reason also to notice later, wherever God especially appears as Creator or Ruler, this name is, in a consistent, but not narrowly pedantic, manner used, in the Old Testament.

But it is not the usage of the name "Elohim" with which we are at present so directly concerned. It is with another name of God with

which we also frequently meet in the Old Testament, the English equivalent of which is "Jehovah." The much debated question as to what was the original pronunciation of this name, is a matter of very minor importance. Its English equivalent, by which we shall refer to it, is, in any case, the well-established, splendidly resonant word, "Jehovah." Many modern scholars have sought to gain currency for some other English transliterative, of more heathen-like sound, lacking the gracious associations with which an evangelical faith, for centuries, has gradually been clothing this name, "Jehovah." It would accord too, with the effort made by many unbelieving scholars, to make Jehovah stand in the same narrow national relation to Israel which the various heathen deities occupied toward their several nations. It would please any who would exclude the Jehovah of the Old Testament from his universe as a whole, and make him merely a national deity. But to attempt now to displace this word of blessed association, by some even more exact transliterative, would be to lose infinitely more than we would gain. To replace it by some one of the proposed substitutes, even though more literal, as "Yahweh," or "Yah-

veh," or "Yahwah," would be to inaugurate now a type of biblical English the consistent adoption of which throughout would become ridiculous. Other words equally inexact as transliteratives are not rejected. And it may be that the offense of this name "Jehovah" is not its orthography, but its religion. However, it is neither the pronunciation nor the derivation of the word which is of chief importance: it is its usage, its meaning.

The first instance of the use of the name "Jehovah," is in the second chapter of Genesis. After the work of creation, as such was narrated, there was an account given of the covenant relations into which God entered with man. In narrating this covenant, however, there is reference incidentally to the work of creation, which work of creation had been already specifically stated. Creation was the fundamental ground of propriety upon which God acted in placing man under the obligations of a covenant. In this portion of the record therefore, where the covenant is the chief feature, and creation is mentioned only incidentally, where God is the God of the covenant rather than the God of creation, the name "Jehovah" is used. Gen.

2: 4. Here, however, this new name "Jehovah" is not thrust recklessly into the sacred narrative, at the risk of probably suggesting to the uninitiated that there were two Gods, the one "Elohim," and the other "Jehovah." There was of course no confusion in the minds of those who first used these names. But the Old Testament was written to be used for the religious instruction of all mankind. It was written in such a way as not unnecessarily to perplex those who have been reared in other and polytheistic religions. After the name "Elohim" had been used to denote God in his creative work in Gen. 1: 2; 2: 3, we find, in the succeeding portion which records his entering into covenant relations with man, the name "Jehovah" is used, but the name "Elohim" is used in conjunction with it. That is, God is called, in this portion of the narrative, "Jehovah Elohim," making it evident that he who is spoken of as "Jehovah" is the same Being who was before called "Elohim."

It is under this name "Jehovah" (with "Elohim" annexed) that God is represented as entering into covenant relations with man, reference being made incidentally to his having performed

the work of creation, not however to give a second account of creation, as some have thoughtlessly supposed, but as his ground of prerogative in placing man under this covenant, and the bearing which creation would have upon it,—“In the day that Jehovah Elohim made the earth and the heavens.” Gen. 2: 4. This is not, let it be noted, a specific account of creation. In the Hebrew it is not even the word “create,” but the more general word meaning “make,” “appoint,” etc. “And Jehovah Elohim formed [the word is ‘yātsār’ ‘formed,’ not, ‘bārā’ ‘created’] man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.” Gen. 2: 7. It was “Jehovah Elohim” who planted a garden for man in the region which was then (and according to the cuneiform remains later also) known as Eden, (Assyrian *edenu*), Gen. 2: 8, and prepared the environment for the covenant of obedience. “And Jehovah Elohim caused to spring forth from the ground every tree . . . and the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” Gen. 2: 9. “And Jehovah Elohim took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden.” Gen. 2: 15. “Jehovah Elohim commanded the man,

saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it." Gen. 2 : 16, 17. At first thought it might seem strange that it was "Jehovah Elohim" rather than "Elohim," who in the succeeding verses is said to have made the woman. But it must be remembered that this portion of chapter 2 is not an account of creation, *per se*, but only a reference to it, in giving an account of the covenant relations into which God entered with man. The word *bārā* which means to "create" strictly, to originate absolutely, is not used in this reference to woman. "Jehovah Elohim . . . took one of his [the man's] ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: and the rib, which Jehovah Elohim had taken from the man, made [*bānāh* 'built'] he a woman." Gen. 2 : 21, 22.

When the Tempter, however, speaks of God, the Tempter who does not acknowledge any covenant between God and man, he does not use this covenant name, "Jehovah." "And he [the Tempter] said to the woman, Yea [or also that] Elohim hath said, Ye shall not eat from every tree of the garden." Gen. 3 : 1. It is no departure from this usage, that the woman in replying also

uses "Elohim" rather than "Jehovah Elohim." It not only avoids unnecessary pedantry in the narrative but it fitly indicates her incipient unbelief in the covenant God, Jehovah.

But continuing, it was "Jehovah Elohim" who came to our first parents after their fall, in the cool of the day. Gen. 3: 8. And so, throughout this portion of the record which represents God in covenant or redemptive dealings with man, he is "Jehovah," with "Elohim" annexed as long as it was deemed necessary in order to avoid polytheistic misunderstanding.

When we come to the account of the sacrificial worship of Cain and Abel, in the fourth chapter of Genesis, in which events the redemptive character of God is still prominent, his name "Jehovah" continues to be used, but the added "Elohim" is omitted. The use of the double name has been sufficiently prolonged in the narrative to teach the fundamental identity of "Elohim" and "Jehovah," and here, moreover, it is less God's complex work of creation and redemption; it concerns more especially his work of redemption,—“And Cain brought from the fruit of the ground an offering to Jehovah . . . and Jehovah had respect [literally

‘looked’] unto Abel and unto his offering.” Gen. 4: 3, 4. It was “Jehovah” who reasoned with Cain regarding his sinful spirit. It was “Jehovah” to whom even Cain might come with his load of sin. “And Cain said unto Jehovah, My iniquity is too great to be forgiven.” Gen. 4: 13. And so on, throughout this narrative it was as “Jehovah” that God dealt with man regarding sin and salvation.

On the other hand, when the record comes to speak of the governmental work of God, where the generations of mankind are his subjects, his name “Elohim” is used. “This is the book of the generations of man in the day that Elohim created man in his likeness, in the likeness of Elohim created he him.” Gen. 5: 1. In the reference to Noah walking with God, Gen. 5: 22, 24, the name “Elohim” is used where at first we might expect the name “Jehovah,” but in the Hebrew there is a further distinction which could be expressed only by a special use of the term “Elohim.” For the Hebrew reads, “And Noah walked with the Elohim.” Unbelievers, too, called their gods “Elohim;” they all had their elohim. In the time of Noah the world had become very wicked. But they believed in the ex-

istence of a God, and they served gods, "elohim," some of them gods of their own devisings; but Noah was exceptional, in that he worshiped the God, the true God, the Elohim. "And Noah walked with the Elohim," *i. e.*, with the true God. When there was no room for misunderstanding as to whether the true God, or some false deity, was intended, or when no contrast was implied, then "Elohim" alone, without the article, was sufficient, as is the case in our own usage in Christian lands: we regularly omit the "the." But when there was any danger of confusion, or when a contrast was intended between the true God and heathen gods, the article was commonly used with Elohim, *e. g.*, when it was a question as to whether Baal or Jehovah was to be recognized, and the test on Mount Carmel decided the case, the people exclaimed, "Jehovah, he is the Elohim! Jehovah, he is the Elohim!" *i. e.*, the true God.

Or to take an earlier instance, the incident between Abraham and Abimelech. Although Abimelech, like all the peoples of the earth as yet, had a knowledge of God only a little less accurate than had Abraham, yet there was a difference,—Abraham's God was a different God in

many respects from the other peoples' gods and this difference is indicated when we read, "So Abraham prayed unto the Elohim [the true God]." Gen. 20: 17. Each of the surrounding peoples had their god, more or less correctly conceived. None of them had lost absolutely all of the truth originally given to their first parents. The Assyrians had their "Ilu," the Arabs their "Allah," the Aramæans their "Eloah," all singulars, corresponding with the Hebrew word "Elohim." But the idea which these words represented had become so far false, that to distinguish the Old Testament view of God from these, it was sometimes necessary to speak of him as "the" God, "the" Elohim. Hence it should be noted that this distinctive use of Elohim, in the incident concerning Noah, was therefore almost equivalent to "Jehovah" (for the true God was the God of redemption), but from a different standpoint.

Coming to Gen., ch. 6, where God is concerned chiefly in the salvation of man, he is called by his name "Jehovah,"—"And Jehovah said, My spirit shall not always strive with [or 'in'] man [kind] in their [or his] wandering he is flesh." Gen. 6: 3. "And Jehovah saw that the wicked-

ness of man was great in the earth . . . but Noah found grace in the eyes of Jehovah." Gen. 6: 5, 8. But when the narrative turns to deal with facts and events in which God performs especially some other work rather than redemption, or in which he is referred to indifferently, the name "Jehovah" is not generally used. In speaking of the corruption of the world before the Deluge, *e. g.*, in which the governmental work of God is emphasized, it is parenthetically said that, "Noah walked with the Elohim." Gen. 6: 9. In the midst of much service of false gods, Noah served the true God. "And Elohim saw and behold it [the earth] was corrupt." Gen. 6: 12. And so on, where God is Ruler or Judge, he is called "Elohim." But upon reaching the point where he speaks mercy and salvation to Noah, he is "Jehovah,"—"And Jehovah said unto Noah, come thou and all thy house into the ark." Gen. 7: 1. Though when reference is made to the command as bearing upon the lower animals only, he is named not "Jehovah," (the lower animals had no "Jehovah") but "Elohim." Gen. 7: 9. So also, when God is spoken of as exercising his sovereign power over nature in causing the

Deluge to subside, and as Ruler restoring citizenship upon the earth, he is called "Elohim." On the other hand, when Noah builds an altar for worship we read, "And Noah built an altar to Jehovah." Gen. 8 : 20. "And Jehovah smelled a sweet savor and Jehovah said to his heart," etc. Gen. 8 : 21.

Thus it was as "Jehovah" that God dealt in covenant or redemptive relations, while in his providential dealings he is called "Elohim." It will be observed, however, that there is no mechanical, stereotyped adherence to this usage of these several names of God, at the expense of strong natural expression. And furthermore, as time advanced there was less need generally for this discrimination, and there was, perhaps, less care exercised in its observance, just as in the usage of similar synonyms in our own day their distinctive usage tends to disappear. Nevertheless the general usage and the practical meaning of this name "Jehovah," within reasonable limits, cannot be mistaken.

It would be impracticable to trace this usage in detail throughout the entire Old Testament, especially as the distinctive usage itself became less essential as time advanced. A glance at

some further passages, here and there, may however be of interest.

It was "Jehovah" who called Abraham, and renewed to him, in national form, the covenant promises,—“And Jehovah said to Abram, Get thee out of thy country . . . and in thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed.” Gen. 12: 1–3. That this covenant was with Abraham and his descendants as a nation, did not at all imply that it had ceased to be a covenant for the individual. And individuals, even in that nation, if they ignored God’s promises of favor, failed to receive his blessing. To urge upon a collective church or nation some high responsibility as to their own life or to the service of others, does not nullify their individual duties of piety and usefulness. It rather intensifies them. The Old Testament religion was individual, but it was not a narrow individualism, escaping all common obligations. And by making the covenant promises also a national issue, it gained not only in enthusiasm and effectiveness within itself, but also in power to defend the truth against surrounding idolatries. Heretofore the promise of a deliverance from sin had almost failed of

adherents, and even with the added enthusiasm of nationalism it barely maintained itself. Nevertheless, the individual and spiritual character of the promise was primary and fundamental.

Although it was clearly enough taught, as we have seen by the first two chapters of Genesis, that Jehovah the God of salvation was the same Being as Elohim the God of Creation, the Almighty One, yet there was a danger that the believing descendants of Abraham, or other believers, in cherishing this name, Jehovah, as their covenant God, might unconsciously come to limit his sway to national proportions, just as the surrounding peoples conceived of their gods—there was a danger. The Old Testament did not teach such limitation of Jehovah's sway, but men have ever been prone to pervert the teaching of Scripture in some direction. Hence at different times it was necessary for the Old Testament to raise its voice against this error. When God would renew his covenant through Moses he explicitly guarded against this misconception. He taught Moses and the people then, that although he was their covenant God, yet he was the Self-Existing, Eternal Being. When

Moses asked God what answer he would give, when the people would ask him who had sent him, the answer was: "I am who I am. Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel, I am hath sent me." Ex. 3: 14. In this he meant to say, that Jehovah was the Self-Existent God. The Hebrew for "Jehovah" and the Hebrew for "I am" are the same word, the same root. It is significant perhaps that the name Jehovah corresponds, not with the past or preterite of this verb, "to be," "to exist," but it corresponds with the imperfect, which in Hebrew corresponds nearly with our present and future. So that Jehovah was not a God who had been merely, and might fail them in the future, but he was the then present and ever-continuing God: the "I Am" and the "I shall Be" if we would give this phrase its complete English equivalent. He could be defined in terms of nothing except himself. "I am who I am."

This passage does not of course teach, as some have hastily concluded, that this incident was the origin of the use of the name "Jehovah;" it was a warning lest the children of Israel, with their special national blessings, might narrow and pervert its meaning. They were to remem-

ber that "Jehovah" was no mere national deity, but the Ever-Existing, Self-Existing God. It was not a new name. It had been cherished of old, probably from earliest times. In this same connection it is said, in speaking of the times of Abraham, almost as if in rebuke to Moses, that he should have known this much about God,— "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob as God Almighty [El Shaddai], and [better 'but'] by my name Jehovah was I not known to them?" Ex. 6: 3. That is, if these ancestors of Moses had known God as "Jehovah" and as "El Shaddai," as the Self and Ever-Existing One, and as the Almighty God, why need Moses ask for any further warrant!

Nevertheless, in still later times, after the redemptive character and work of Jehovah had been for centuries cherished in the faith of God's chosen people, they were repeatedly in danger of misconceiving the extent of his dominion and of becoming self-important and self-righteous themselves. They began to think of themselves as secure, because they were Israelites, and began to look upon Jehovah as obligated and limited to them, as caring for and saving them only. This was not the teaching of the Old Testament, but

their perversion of it. The clear teaching of the Old Testament, that responsibility was individual, did not save them from the delusion of seeking safety in the multitude. It does not preserve from the same mistake men who possess the larger New Testament teaching of to-day. It did not preserve the scribes and Pharisees of our Lord's day from taking shelter in the same delusion. But neither did it justify them even in the kindly omniscience of the Saviour: nor did it justify these people of old, in their narrow conception of Jehovah. It does not mean that they, any more than the Pharisees of our Lord's day, were correctly interpreting the teaching of the Old Testament. The prophets frequently reminded their hearers, that he upon whom they looked with pride as their Jehovah, as their God of salvation, was also Elohim, the God of creation, the God of all the earth and of all men. As in Gen., ch. 2, it required to be made clear that "Jehovah" was the same God as "Elohim" of Gen., ch. 1, so in later times, when the children of Israel prided themselves in being the chosen people of Jehovah, they required to be reminded that he was also Elohim. "Israel shall be saved in Jehovah with an everlasting salvation. . . .

Elohim himself that formed the earth and made it. . . . I am Jehovah and there is none else." Isa. 45 : 17, 18.

It is in this way that Isaiah, with all his evangelicalism, rebukes the pride of self-righteous Israel by frequently speaking to them of God by the name, not "Jehovah," but "Elohim"—their "Elohim" and the "Elohim" of all the earth. The same is true in the prophecy of Jeremiah, in the usage of these names of God, and for a similar reason. But it is not strange that, a little later, when captivity had wrought repentance, the equally evangelical prophet Ezekiel in addressing his fellow-Israelites, freely spoke of God as their "Jehovah," their covenant God. He could do so without flattery. He had not the reason which Isaiah had to chide them for breaking that covenant, or to rebuke them for their self-righteousness, or to remind them that God was also the God who cared for the heathen nations, the Elohim of all the earth. Thus, "And they shall know that I am Jehovah," occurs in Ezekiel more than fifty times.

It is clearly evident that whenever the Old Testament emphasizes the covenant redemptive work of God, he is regularly and consistently

called "Jehovah," except where some other equivalent is used as, *e. g.*, when the qualifying phrase "of salvation" or "of my salvation" is used with "Elohim"—the "God of my salvation." In the Psalms, and especially in those psalms which are decidedly devotional, as, *e. g.*, many of those in Book I, God is generally addressed as "Jehovah." "Jehovah is my Shepherd; I shall not want." But if an unbeliever, however, is signally represented as speaking of God, he uses "Elohim" rather than "Jehovah." "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no Elohim." Ps. 14 : 1. On the other hand the believer says, "Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle," etc. Ps. 15 : 1.

Psalm 19 is a striking example of the distinctive usage of these Divine names. In the former half of the psalm (1-6), in which nature is made to manifest the power and rulership of God, an abbreviated form of the name Elohim is used, viz., "El." "The heavens declared the glory of 'El,'" etc. Ps. 19 : 1. But in the second half of the psalm (7-15), throughout which the "written word" is made to tell of his great work of redemption, it is the name "Jehovah" which is used. "The law of Jehovah is perfect

converting the soul; the testimony of Jehovah is sure [or faithful] making wise the simple: the statutes of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes," etc. Ps. 19: 7, 8ff. And so elsewhere,—“I will bless Jehovah at all times.” Ps. 34: 1, etc., etc. Though where both the redemptive and the governmental side of God's work are referred to there is no studied effort at mechanical exactness.

It is not necessary to follow in detail this usage further. Sufficient has been said to show in a large way that the name Jehovah was used from very early times, and with reasonable discrimination, when God was referred to as the covenant God—the God of redemption,—as distinguished from his other relationships. But in this a reasonable care was exercised to obviate the danger of teaching polytheism. It was made clear that “Jehovah” was identical in being with “Elohim,” etc. The double name “Jehovah Elohim,” which we found used in the early part of Genesis, for this reason is used also in later portions, when similar reasons required the same precautions; *e. g.*, it is used in the book of Jonah. The Ninevites had their generic word

for God, "Ilu," corresponding with the singular of Elohim. They had had the original revelation regarding God and salvation which had been given to Adam and Abel, but they had disregarded it. Even Schultz admits that "in the time of Mo-saism . . . even among the heathen there was everywhere a perfectly unhesitating conviction as to the existence of the Deity. All the religious errors of the time were due to a confounding of this Deity with the world of sense," etc.¹ And now Jonah comes to preach to the Ninevites, to preach to them salvation by Jehovah, the God of salvation. He was the One Supreme Being whom, through their error and their idols, they partially knew. Jonah was not to multiply gods by teaching them of another God "Jehovah." And the writer of this book, true to the circumstances, as, indeed all of the Old Testament writers were, more true than those who would criticise or correct them, records it thus,—“Jehovah Elohim prepared a gourd.” Jonah 4 : 6. He whom Jonah had so often spoken of as “Jehovah” was also Elohim.

So the distinctive use of the article with Elohim, which we have already noticed, is found

¹ *O. T. Theology*, Eng. Trans., Vol. II, pp. 100, 101.

elsewhere when necessary throughout the Old Testament, whenever the true God was to be definitely distinguished from other gods. This accounts for its frequent usage in the Books of Samuel, when there was much contact with other peoples who acknowledged other gods, or where there might be confusion,—“So David went and brought up the ark of the God [the true God] from the house of Obed-edom,” etc. Although it was in the house of a Gittite of a foreign name, yet it was not a relic of idolatry, but the ark of the true God. So, also, frequently in the book of Ecclesiastes, as the preacher addressed an audience largely composed of representatives of foreign or surrounding peoples, each having their “Eloah” or “Ilu” or “Allah,” each having a god more or less correctly conceived of,—“There came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth [not necessarily in person but by representatives] which had heard of his wisdom.” 1 Kings 4: 34.

In addressing such an audience, an audience so varied and undefined theologically, Solomon (or some person else if the non-Solomonic authorship of the book can be reasonably shown)

could not speak of God to them as "Jehovah," exactly, without considerable explanation, nor could he call him simply "Elohim," undefined; for they had their *elohim*, too. But he could specify that the God of whom he spoke, was the true God, "the" God,—“I know that, whatsoever the *Elohim* [the true God] doeth, it shall be for ever,” Eccl. 3: 14, and so, frequently, in this book of Ecclesiastes. On the other hand, at the dedication of the temple, supplicating God in the presence of the faithful, he says, “Jehovah our *Elohim* be with us,” 1 Kings 8: 57; though here he guards against any narrow national interpretation of God’s character or dominion,—“That all the people of the earth may know that Jehovah is the *Elohim*, there is none else.” 1 Kings 8: 60.

Thus “Jehovah” was the name which to the Old Testament believer expressed the idea of God as One who was willing and able to save. How he was able, was not yet fully revealed. The Atonement by which sin could, in righteousness, be forgiven, was not even in the later part of the Old Testament sufficiently revealed to make that atonement the chief ground of hope. But Jehovah had made a covenant of

redemption. He was the God of salvation, the God who saved. When the heathen spoke of Israel's God he generally called him Elohim, as the young Egyptian said to David, "Swear unto me by Elohim." 1 Sam. 30: 15. Or if he did refer to him as "Jehovah," it was as a national deity like his own god. But there is no excuse for modern critics doing the same. Repeatedly the Old Testament corrects that tendency. In accordance with the Old Testament conception of "Jehovah" as the God of redemption, it was to Jehovah that sacrifices were offered, with the exception of a few instances in which it was to the almost equivalent, "the" Elohim—the true God. When the righteous portion of the human race first realized the need of a distinctive term, to represent them as a church as distinct from the unbelieving world, they called themselves with this name,—“And to Seth was born a son, and he called his name Enosh; then it was begun [or there was a beginning] to call with the name ‘Jehovah.’” Gen. 4: 26.

As the servants of Christ are called Christians, or called with the name of Christ, so men then, who served Jehovah, as Seth did, were called with Jehovah's name. That was their desig-

nation in distinction from the unbelieving world, as it is believed the descendants of Cain, in general, were.

Hence, to sum up the idea which "Jehovah" expressed in Old Testament salvation:—He was God, not so much as Creator and Preserver, but as Saviour. After the Fall he had made a promise, a covenant, with man for his salvation from sin. He had made a promise of a Deliverer, who should in some sense be human, who would overcome the Tempter. This promise, renewed and unfolded, became more and more the expectation of the believer, and in time began to suggest the ground and method of salvation. But in the meantime, the believer placed his confidence directly in Jehovah, "they trusted in him." Faith bridged the mysteries which lay between a sinful soul and its spotless cleansing. The question as to how a righteous God could forgive sin, how God could be just and yet justify the ungodly, did not much trouble the Old Testament believer.

Jehovah represented to his mind a God who was merciful enough to receive the sinner, and who had promised to provide a conqueror for the power of evil. The uncommendable character-

istics which Professor Duff¹ says the Yahwist writers attributed to their god are without any warrant whatever in the Old Testament record. To Jehovah he prayed; in him he trusted; to him he felt allegiance; his life purpose and ideal became changed; he served Jehovah; he became a different man; sin ceased to rule in him; Jehovah's will became his law, he was saved from sin. Of the spiritual agencies at work in his soul, he knew little. But he knew that his life was in unison with Jehovah, his delight was in the law of Jehovah and in his law he meditated day and night. "Jehovah is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" Ps. 27: 1. "When my father and my mother forsake me, then Jehovah will take me up." Ps. 27: 10. "Blessed is the man unto whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity." Ps. 32: 2. To the believer of old, Jehovah embodied, though undefinedly, most of what we now, more analytically, discern to be accomplished by the Triune God. That in salvation which we distribute to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Old Testament believer centered in Jehovah, and the steps in the process which we are anxious—perhaps too anxious—to under-

¹ *The Theology and Ethics of the Hebrews*, p. 28.

stand, his simple faith intrusted to Jehovah. The place which Christ occupies in the conscious faith of the New Testament believer at least to-day, was, so far as it was paralleled at all, occupied by Jehovah.

But the special work of divine mediation and atonement were little recognized by man in the Old Testament plan; though upon the Divine side—to Jehovah himself—it must have been as essential then as now.

Man's faith laid hold upon "Jehovah, Jehovah, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty." Ex. 34: 6, 7.

VI

GRACE AND FAITH IN OLD TESTAMENT SALVATION

FROM the beginning of human history, some men out of the mass of mankind were saved; and we have the New Testament as authority for it that at least some Old Testament worthies are now numbered among the redeemed.¹ But how did that Old Testament salvation become realized by them? To think of those saints of old is to ask, Was that salvation a work of God's free grace? and did it come to man through faith? For if there was another way of appropriating this salvation then, may not the moralist claim it still?

At the outset, two facts present themselves. First, that in the Old Testament, and especially in the earlier portions of it, relatively little is said regarding the terms or conditions upon which men might be saved; and secondly, in the Old Testament religion, a prominent place seems

¹ Cf. Hebrews, ch. 11.

to be given to good works. Believers made mention of their own good works in a manner uncommon in the New Testament. Is there any explanation of these facts?

In regard to the former, it must be remembered that an explicit, detailed knowledge of the terms of salvation was not then, and is not now, absolutely necessary to the individual's salvation. There is in religion always an element that "doth not appear." A religion which embraces once and forever the height and depth of all spiritual things may not tarry long at intermediate points to debate over terms with God. In due time these were unfolded. But many of the most Christlike disciples of to-day have never made an exhaustive analysis of the conditions of salvation. As to how much knowledge is necessary to salvation, in the case of the adult, able to appreciate the nature of sin on the other hand, few would venture to fix a limit. Moreover, there was perhaps a reason why such features of the plan of redemption were not at first given with more explicitness. As yet the fundamental ground upon which sin could be forgiven, the Atonement for sin, had been only dimly revealed. There could be less said, as yet, therefore about

the terms. There is a unique consistency in the unfolding of that wondrous plan of redemption. And it was only as the revelation progressed, as the character and work of the promised Messiah became more fully unfolded, that the details of the terms likewise were given. From the beginning, sufficient was given concerning the terms to enable men to avail themselves of this salvation.

As to the apparent emphasis which is placed upon works, in the Old Testament religion, there is one consideration which must not be overlooked. If neither the justifying ground of pardon, nor the conditions of salvation, could at first be stated in detail, what was there to differentiate the saved man from the unsaved? It was necessary, of course, that salvation should appeal to men as a need; this their own sinfulness and its effects taught them. But this salvation must also evidence itself as a reality, as something which distinguished its possessor from other men. Here perhaps is the explanation of the prominent place given to good works in the Old Testament. Other features of the plan of salvation could not, as yet, be unfolded in their dimensions; but still, salvation as a present

actuality was not to be for that reason minimized. It was necessary that an emphatic difference should be evident, between "him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." And the way was always open for the expressing of this difference by results, by the testimony of works in the lives of the godly (though of course, like everything good, it was capable of abuse in the direction of self-righteousness). For this reason an apparent prominence is given to good works, a prominence, however, which did not place them over in antithesis to grace, as a careful study of the Old Testament, in its references to the salvation of individuals, will abundantly testify. When it is said in the New Testament, moreover, that "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," it is not intended to state antithetical, but complementary, truths. Moses and the Old Testament, writers in general brought the law, the torah, the instruction, the instruction regarding a gracious salvation; but they could not bestow it, they were not the givers of it. It was Jesus Christ who brought the grace, not only now, but even in Moses' time. It was through his promised, but as yet vaguely revealed, work, that salvation

would be free. Christ brought that of which Moses had taught. Their works—*i. e.*, of Christ and Moses—were complementary, not antithetical.

But let us examine the Old Testament teaching and see to what extent this salvation was the result of God's free grace.

That there was such a thing as forgiveness for sin, and yet that the sin of all men indiscriminately was not forgiven, is clearly the teaching of the Old Testament. It is taught in the difference of response which God made to Cain and to Abel. Though it could not of course be inferred that forgiveness, in this case and always, carried with it salvation. It could not, without other reasons, be inferred that the man whose confession as expressed in word or in sacrifice was accepted by God, was saved, that he was thereby given a permanently different standing before God, was the recipient of an enduring change of nature. Into this we shall inquire in a later chapter. In the meantime it may be noted, however, that in the Old Testament the prayer of the penitent for forgiveness, whether expressed in word or in sacrificial act, seldom stops short of a longing for a work of inward

renewal and permanent deliverance from sin. But in those petitions, whether for immediate forgiveness or enduring salvation, there is often voiced this truth, that it will be of the grace of God, that it is not a reward of merit but a gift of grace. "Have mercy upon me, O Jehovah; O Jehovah, heal me." Ps. 6: 2. "Have mercy upon me, O God, . . . wash me, . . . cleanse me from my sin." Ps. 51: 1, 2. It was clearly taught that salvation as a practical victory over sin, was beyond man's power to attain,—“It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” Jer. 10: 23. According to the Old Testament, man was unable to make complete amends for sin or to live without it. “Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.” Ps. 143: 2. “If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, who shall stand?” Ps. 130: 3.

But, if salvation was not accomplished by human merit or effort, by what agency was it effected? At a very early period we read,—“And Jehovah saw the wickedness of man that it was great in the earth, and Jehovah said, My Spirit shall not always strive with [or be humbled in] man.” Gen. 6: 5, 3. This passage does not

verbally say that Jehovah's Spirit was working with men for the purpose of their salvation; but what lesser purpose could he have had in view? It is their wickedness or sinfulness which is specially at point. For what did Jehovah's Spirit work with them, except that they might be saved from this sinfulness?

There are other passages, however, which leave no room for doubt as to this gracious agency of God's Spirit in the Old Testament,—“Thy Spirit is good; lead me in the land of uprightness. Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake.” Ps. 143: 10, 11. In Ezekiel 36: 27, we read, “And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” Without differentiating the Spirit of Jehovah from Jehovah himself as a Person, the Old Testament clearly teaches that thus a spiritual, inward change was wrought by the Spirit of Jehovah. In some passages the Spirit of Jehovah is represented not so much in the act of renewing the heart, as in actuating and directing the life which has been renewed. Thus according to Zech. 4: 6, Jehovah's Spirit was to be the light-giving power among or through believers,—“Not by might, nor

by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts." Even in early times this appears to have been currently believed, for even Pharaoh seemed to know these fundamentals of religion. Speaking of Joseph he said, "Can we find such an one as this, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" though here, as an unbeliever, he spoke of God by the name Elohim. But he recognized the actuating power of God's Spirit as a well-understood truth. The conversion of Saul is interesting in this connection. In a later chapter we will consider the permanency of that change which was wrought in him. But for the present, notice the Divine agency by which it was effected, according to the announcement made to Saul by Samuel,—“The Spirit of Jehovah will come upon thee and thou . . . shalt be turned into another man.” 1 Sam. 10:6.

Thus not only did the Old Testament clearly teach that man was unable to live without sin or to cleanse his own heart, once sinful, but on the other hand, it clearly teaches that the Spirit of Jehovah was in some way at work changing the hearts of men, in some way working for the salvation of men from sin.

The freeness of that saving work of his Spirit

is implied in many petitions as well as in man's own inability,—“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness.” Ps. 51: 1. “He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.” Ps. 23: 3. As if the freeness or graciousness of his forgiveness were unquestionable, we read, “Hath God forgotten to be gracious?” Ps. 77: 9. The salvation, both physical and spiritual, granted to Noah, was conferred upon him not upon the ground of his merit, though of course he was morally better than his contemporaries; it is expressly declared that it was upon another ground,—“Noah found grace in the eyes of Jehovah.” Gen. 6: 8. In this way we read,—“Noah was a just [or ‘justified’] man,”—not a sinless man. His intemperance on a later occasion would disprove that. He was saved by “grace.” But notwithstanding all this, though the Old Testament did clearly teach that the Spirit of Jehovah was efficiently active in the salvation of every believer, yet there can be little doubt but that many believers had no formulated conception of that fact. Their lives had been freed from the dominion of sin, they found peace in their religion, but they had no very well-defined idea

of how their salvation had been wrought. The same is true of multitudes of believers to-day.

But if salvation was by grace, how widely gracious was it? To whom was it free? Was it not open to Cain as well as to Abel? Otherwise, why was it made known to Cain, or why was he taught the process of approach to Jehovah for forgiveness? And in like manner was it not open to the descendants of Cain as to the descendants of Seth? It was certainly open to the contemporaries of Noah, as it was to Noah himself: otherwise his preaching to them was a cruel mockery. Was it not free for the citizens of Ur, as for Abraham? The people of Ur and of all Babylonia had the same body of truth regarding God, essentially, as Abraham had. They neglected it and disobeyed it, as men do with the larger volume of revealed truth in their homes to-day. The call which Abraham obeyed was essentially the call which they disobeyed. There were doubtless many believers in Babylonia, many unrecorded Melchizedeks, but their influence was lost and disappeared as they remained amid the increasing sinfulness and error and idolatry of the land. Abraham took what was best in the belief of his people;

Jehovah separated him from the baser influences ; the knowledge and faith which he had possessed were fostered. Though often very imperfect he and his descendants preserved their ancestral truth, and Jehovah still further increased it. How widely free was this gracious salvation of the Old Testament ! " Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked ? saith the Lord Jehovah ; and not rather that he should return from his way, and live ? " Ezek. 18 : 23. " Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters . . . without money and without price." Isa. 55 : 1.


In the light of all this, the favors which were shown to those who were saved, shown to them either individually or collectively, cannot be interpreted as disfavor toward those who were not saved.

And this raises the question, What then made this difference ? If salvation was gracious and free, wherein lay the difference ?

This brings us to the human side. For man was not a disinterested participant in his own salvation. Some were more consciously and actively interested than others. But no man we may believe was saved contrary to his own desire. Let us discover what the Old Testament

teaches as to man's acceptance or reception of this gracious salvation.

There can be no doubt that the first stage in his experience was a sense of his own sinfulness. This feature was present in the earliest experiences of salvation. When Abel brought his sacrifice to Jehovah we cannot impute to his act mere meaningless formality. In offering a life instead of his own life he meant something, he meant to confess his sin, that he had sinned to the extent of forfeiting his own life. The whole Mosaic ritual, which to a great extent was but a crystallization of the religious ideas that had prevailed among the godly in every branch of the human family from the beginning, rested upon the presupposition that the offerer drew near impressed with his sinfulness. Anything which showed the absence of such sense of sin was most severely condemned,—“Bring no more vain oblations.” Isa. 1 : 13. Not only did he bring a sacrifice for his sin, but the fact that in later times he himself was debarred from entering into the Holy Place, reminded him of his persistent sinfulness. The elaborate cleansings of the priesthood emphasized the fact that sin was the great barrier between God and man.



From the earliest times and throughout the entire Old Testament, confession of sin was required.

In his wonderful dedication prayer, Solomon voiced, no doubt, the best religious thought of his time when he pleaded for his people,—“If they sin against thee (for there is no man that sinneth not), and thou be angry with them . . . yet if they bethink themselves . . . and repent and make supplication unto thee . . . saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness, and so return unto thee with all their heart and with all their soul . . . then hear thou their prayer . . . and forgive.” 1 Kings 8: 46–50. It may be said that these prayers would be offered, not for initial salvation, but rather for the forgiveness of sins committed by righteous men. This would doubtless be true of much of the confession recorded in the Old Testament, as it would be true of much confession to-day: *e. g.*, “I said, I will confess my transgressions unto Jehovah; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.” Ps. 32: 5. Nevertheless, if there was any sin which required and received confession, the sin which preceded conversion would not be omitted.

The Old Testament world has less light than we upon the question of the Trinity and many other truths, but they understood to the full that they were sinners, that their sin needed to be confessed and forgiven, and that they required to be saved from it. In word or in sacrificial act, the need of confession of sin is written all over the Old Testament record; not only the open and grossly offensive overt acts of wrongdoing, but secret and even inadvertent sin. "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults." Ps. 19: 12. Sacrifices even were offered for sins committed in ignorance,—“And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly . . . when the sin, which they have sinned against it [the commandment of God], is known, then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin.” Lev. 4: 13, 14. The Old Testament taught that there was not only loss and harm attached to sin, but guilt, and it had a definite word, “*āshām*,” to express this idea.


The confession which was required in the Old Testament, like confession to-day, was to include penitence, and, so far as reasonable, reform and

restitution,—“If he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; if the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live.” Ezek. 33: 14, 15. While there were specified rules by which the sinner was to express his confession of his sin, and his desire for forgiveness, before the priest, rules wise and helpful, rules which no person who knew them could afford to disregard during the time that they were Divinely authorized, and during which time they wrought so favorably for the instruction of those who observed them, yet they were never absolutely essential to acceptable confession. In the days preceding their formal deliverance through Moses, as well as in the extra-Israelitish world after the time of Moses, many found forgiveness without such priesthood or prescribed expression of repentance and confession.

But whether through priest, or directly to Jehovah, repentance and confession were ever the voice of approach to God. It may be said that in some petitions of the Old Testament it was escape from physical evil, rather than from sin, which was sought, and that the end desired was

earthly good rather than spiritual blessing. It must be added that these mingle still in the prayer of the believer. Yet the Old Testament believer clearly discerned and often definitely expressed his desire for something better than earthly good,—“Thy lovingkindness is better than life.” Ps. 63: 3.

So also it must be noticed that sometimes it was national sin that was confessed, and national deliverance and forgiveness that was sought, rather than personal or individual. Nevertheless it would be far from the teaching of the Old Testament to say that the confession or salvation taught therein was either primarily or mainly national. The church had been in existence, and multitudes had been saved from sin, during the period of two thousand years preceding the call of Abraham or the founding of the Israelitish nation. Men like Abel and Noah were not required to wait for a national covenant. The covenant as renewed by God to Abraham did not alter the way of salvation. It rather unified and quickened the human agencies by which the knowledge of that salvation was published, and through which confession and repentance were effected.



But in salvation, there is not only the negative side—the forgiveness and removal of sin in answer to confession and repentance—but there is a positive side, there is the coming into possession of something in the place of sin and sinfulness. Whether salvation to the Old Testament believer gave the same stability, the same peace and the same future hope, we shall have reason to inquire later. But there was in Old Testament salvation, as in the New, a positive blessing, a salvation from sin. How did man possess himself of it? In addition to his sense of sin and his confession thereof, how did he appropriate this God-given gracious salvation?

This is set forth in the Old Testament not so much by a specific word as by the general attitude which is there characteristic of the righteous. Instead of the New Testament direction, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," the Old Testament rather describes the attitude of those who are saved. This attitude is expressed by a variety of terms, each of which has, as its central, vital idea, trust, confidence (or faith),—"But the salvation of the righteous is of [or 'from'] Jehovah . . . Jehovah will help them . . . and save

them, because they trust in him." Ps. 37 : 39, 40. The Hebrew word "hhāsāh," here rendered trust, means to "flee to," to "take refuge," to "trust," and is used in many similar passages,—“How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.” Ps. 36 : 7. “Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.” Ps. 2 : 12. “Preserve me, O God : for in thee do I put my trust.” Ps. 16 : 1. “O taste and see that Jehovah is good : blessed is the man that trusteth in him.” Ps. 34 : 8. “Be merciful unto me, O God, . . . for my soul trusteth in thee.” Ps. 57 : 1. “Jehovah is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.” Nah. 1 : 7.

A still more common Hebrew word to express this idea is “bātāhh,” to “lean on,” to “confide,” to “set hope or confidence in,” to “trust.” “I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.” Ps. 13 : 5. “O Jehovah of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.” Ps. 84 : 12. “Blessed is the man that trusteth in Jehovah, and whose hope Jehovah is.” Jer. 17 : 7. “Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation.” Ps. 78 : 22.

The synonym translated "believed," in this verse, is the Hebrew word "āmān" to "support," or intransitively to "be firm," or in the Hiphil (or causative) form, to "trust," to "confide in," to "believe." This is the word which is used when we read, "And he [Abraham] believed in Jehovah, and he accounted it to him for righteousness." Gen. 15: 6. It is a noun formed from this same root which is translated "faith" in the Old Testament. "The just shall live by his faith." Hab. 2: 4. It was faith which, according to this passage, characterized the "just" or "justified" man; it was faith which was distinctive of his experience in contrast with other men, with ungodly men, as, *e. g.*, in 2 Kings 17: 13, 14: "Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in Jehovah their God." That which turned the tide in the fate of the Ninevites was "the people [or men] of Nineveh believed in God," Jonah 3: 5.

Without citing other instances it must be evident that Old Testament salvation, though gracious and free, yet required trust or faith on the part of the recipient. This attitude of trust or confidence in Jehovah characterized and distinguished the man who is spoken of as "just," *i. e.*, "justified" or "righteous," the saved man. There is perhaps this difference between the Old and New Testaments upon this point, that the New Testament represents saving faith as an appropriating act, while the Old Testament represents the corresponding trust or belief rather as an attitude, an attitude toward Jehovah. For this reason it is scarcely as well-defined as New Testament "faith," and is expressed in the Old Testament by a greater variety of terms.

In all this we are not overlooking the fact that the Old Testament terms used to denote trust or faith in Jehovah, have likewise oftentimes a secular application, just as we still sometimes speak of having "faith" in commercial or scientific ventures. The religious usage does not prohibit the secular usage, neither does the secular usage exclude the religious usage of these terms. We have been careful to cite passages wherein sin and salvation were at issue.

It was a "trust" or "faith" in Jehovah as opposed to self-confidence,—“Trust in [or on] Jehovah with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.” Prov. 3:5. It was a faith in Jehovah as opposed to confidence in this world. “They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.” Ps. 49:6,7. Nevertheless, faith in Jehovah would oft-times be followed by earthly blessing. “Wait on Jehovah, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land.” Ps. 37:34. So the New Testament injunction, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matt. 6:33. But in the Old Testament as in the New, let it be noted, the order is the same: faith or trust in Jehovah, *i. e.*, spiritual faith, was of first importance. Those who find in the Old Testament promises a system of worldly bribes, have lacked the spiritual eye to discern its essential meaning. They have brought to the study of the Old Testament a low conception which the Old Testament believer would have utterly repudiated.

This Old Testament "trust" or "faith," moreover, was not in place of, or in any antithesis to, good works: it was the accompaniment of good works. "Trust in Jehovah, and do good." Ps. 37:3. The prayer of the faithful was that Jehovah would help him to do what was good. "Teach me to do thy will." Ps. 143:10. A profession of trust in Jehovah without the accompanying grace of good works was specially rebuked. To the Sodom-like sinners of Israel, Jehovah declared, "When ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood [or rather 'bloody deeds,' as the plural in Hebrew which is here used, regularly means]. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil." Isa. 1:15, 16. Nor is this merely a late teaching of the Old Testament. The rebuke to Cain implied the same need of consistent life, if profession or worship should be acceptable. And the Psalmist inscribes over the portal of the church forever, "O Jehovah, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart," Ps. 15:1, 2.

When we remember that many of the passages here cited were recorded, not as new truth requiring explanation or defense, but as truth already generally acknowledged, though never entirely realized in practice, as indeed is true of our own accepted truth to-day, we gain some idea of what a reality salvation was to men of old. They did not know, nor perhaps even inquire into, all the details of its accomplishment. But sin was real, awful in its cruelty and depravity. Jehovah was merciful. Forgiveness was free, and they trusted in him and were "not put to shame." It is not always easy to-day to divide between the saved and the unsaved; their views of God may be much alike and their attitude toward his church and toward the world may be much alike; and yet salvation is a reality, and so it was in Old Testament times.

On God's part it was graciously free. Though Christ had not yet suffered for the sinner, nor had his future life and death been revealed with sufficient definiteness to make that atonement to the sinner the ground of his forgiveness, yet the Old Testament no less assured him that forgiveness and cleansing, in other words salvation, was free. It was, for the believer of

old, folded up, hidden, but sure, in such phrases as we frequently meet in the Psalms :—"According to thy lovingkindness." "For thy name's sake," etc. "Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day. Remember, O Jehovah, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses." Ps. 25: 5, 6. "Hear me, O Jehovah; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies."

Yet it was a lovingkindness, or tender mercy, which discerned between obedience and disobedience, between belief or trust and unbelief. "Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am Jehovah that exerciseth lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth." Jer. 9: 24.

On man's part this salvation implied not only a sense of his sinfulness and a penitent confession of it, but a habitual attitude of trust in Jehovah; a life in which this trust in Jehovah was characteristic, a trust which wrought obedience. As to the nature of that changed or saved life, in all its bearings, we are about to inquire.

VII

THE OLD TESTAMENT CONCEPTION OF THE SAVED LIFE

THERE are but two classes of people in the world, saved and unsaved. Many synonyms are used to denote each of these two classes : but whatever the terms used, the idea is the same. There is a division of all mankind into these two classes. We cannot tell who is included, oftentimes, in the one class or in the other. The New Testament warns us against narrowly judging of our fellow-men, teaching us that there will be surprises upon both sides on the Day of Judgment.

But while Scripture does not encourage one man to erect his judgment as a criterion of his fellow-man's salvation, yet it does furnish us with guides for ourselves and with truths which we may use as tests of character, which enable us in a practical and general way to discern the saved life. In a large way, " by their fruits ye shall know them " ; although many whom we would not have expected, " shall come from the

cast and the west, and shall sit down in the kingdom."

With this limitation upon our knowledge to determine in every case the spiritual status of our fellow-man, let us inquire what the Old Testament taught regarding the saved life, the saved man.

For the Old Testament recognized such a division, two well-recognized classes which it repeatedly placed in contrast, one with the other. As in the New Testament, so here, many terms are used to denote these two classes, but the line of division is essentially the same. The one class, those who are saved, are described under such terms as the "righteous." "For thee [Noah] have I seen righteous before me in this generation." Gen. 7: 1. "Wilt thou destroy the righteous with the wicked?" Gen. 18: 23ff. "Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repaid." Prov. 13: 21. "The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." Ps. 1: 5, etc., etc. Or again they are described as those "that fear the Lord [or Jehovah]." "But he honoreth them that fear Jehovah." Ps. 15: 4. "Ye that fear Jehovah, praise him." Ps. 22: 23.

“ Then they that feared Jehovah spake often one to another : and Jehovah hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared Jehovah, and that thought upon his name.” Mal. 3: 16, etc. So also many other terms such as “ perfect man,” “ just,” “ upright,” etc. “ Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.” Gen. 6: 9. “ And that man [Job] was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.” Job. 1: 1. “ Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins ; let them not have dominion over me : then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.” Ps. 19: 13.

It will be noticed that these terms are frequently placed in contrast with others, which denote the sinful or unsaved man. In the face of hundreds of such passages, it requires no argument to show that the Old Testament recognized two classes among men, the unsaved and the saved : not that this distinction could always be made by men ; but there was such a division.

As to what was the Old Testament conception of unsaved man, its conception of sin and the sinner, we have already seen. Let us now

consider what is its conception of the other class of whom we may speak uniformly as the "saved man," and of his nature as the "saved life." We naturally ask, Did this salvation mean more than pardon or forgiveness? Did it include also an inward change of character? Was there anything in Old Testament salvation corresponding to regeneration and conversion in the New Testament conception of these terms? That this salvation implied the forgiveness of sins will not be questioned by any. It was the very language of the saved soul,—“Who forgiveth all thine iniquities,” Ps. 103: 3; and the believer found comfort in the teaching, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” Ps. 32: 1. Under various forms of expression it is clearly taught that the sins of the “righteous” or those of whom we may speak as the saved, were forgiven or “blotted out.”

But was there an inward change, corresponding to regeneration and conversion? If there was such in many believers of old, we would not expect to find the change itself universal as a conscious experience among the saved. As a conscious experience it is not universal among believers now. Salvation is wider than con-

version. Many are saved who have not been converted. Their life of faith and love began so early that there could be no conscious turning, no conversion. It is the looseness of early home training which makes conversion so common: it should be almost an unknown experience in believing households. It would be a great mistake to suppose that the New Testament teaches that conversion must be the universal experience of believers. How many a true child of God has been painfully perplexed by this erroneous assumption of some earnest but mistaken revivalist!

Even in regard to the result of the saving change, or to the change as a result, we will not expect every Old Testament believer to make an emphatic declaration that he possessed absolute assurance that he was saved. The wondrous work of grace has never been amenable to the stereotyped forms and rules of men. In this connection an incident occurs to me. Some few years ago on spending a week with a ministerial kinsman a call was made upon an aged parishioner then upon a sick bed. After leaving the house my friend related to me an incident in the life of this man, whom he considered a devout

believer. On being confronted once at the church door by a somewhat popular revivalist, with the question, "Are you saved, my friend?" his honest heatherland reply was: "Indeed that is no' so easy a question to answer. David is said to have been a man after God's own heart, and yet if he had lived in our day he would have been hanged!" Let us beware of the mistake of making the redemptive experience of one man the necessary mould for every other man.

Allowing then for the fact that there might have been many saved men of old, who had no conscious experience that an inward change of nature had taken place, was such a change a frequent or usual experience in Old Testament salvation? When there was a possibility of it, when men became the servants of Jehovah, not, as Samuel, in their infancy, but in later life after wandering in sin, did they commonly experience more than forgiveness? Did they experience a change of nature? Or whether their experience of it were very vivid or not, did the Old Testament teach that they believed that such change had taken place, or was involved in their salvation? Let it speak for itself.

Forgiveness alone was not sufficient,—“Blessed

is the man whose transgression is forgiven . . . and in whose spirit there is no guile." Ps. 32 : 1, 2. "Have mercy upon me, O God . . . wash me . . . cleanse me from my sin." Ps. 51 : 1, 2. Forgiveness was not an isolated act, but a link in the great chain of salvation. Although the "renewing" was not stated in exactly the New Testament form, "Ye must be born again," yet it was so nearly identical that any "master in Israel" might well be expected to know it. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart," etc. Ezek. 36 : 26. So the Psalmist realized how radical was the work needed, requiring the creative originaive power of God. "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me." Ps. 51 : 10.

Even when this work of change is described under some other figure instead of renewal, as, for example, that of "washing," it is little less thorough. "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity." Ps. 51 : 2. The Hebrew word here used to denote "washing" is not the word which is ordinarily used to denote washing as of the hands or of the body; it is the word "kābhās" which means to "trample," as filthy clothes

were trampled in a trough in washing, implying here the penitent's knowledge and appreciation of the severity of the work which had to be performed in his heart. So "heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee." Ps. 41: 4.

The change which was effected in the life of Saul is described with more of detail than any case prior to his time. For this reason it is interesting and instructive. It was in pursuance of an announcement made to Saul by Samuel,—“The Spirit of Jehovah will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and thou shalt be changed into another man.” 1 Sam. 10: 6. So too in verse 9,—“God gave him another heart.” The Hebrew word here rendered “change” or “turned” into another man is the verb “*hhāphāk*” elsewhere translated “overthrow” or “overturn,” reminding us of the New Testament convert,—*e. g.*, “Overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt.” Gen. 19: 29. “Overturneth the mountains by the roots.” Job 28: 9. “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” Jonah 3: 4. It is to be noted that this work of the Spirit, in Saul's case, accomplished more than merely to turn him into another man,—it enabled him to prophesy. But the fact that the Spirit performed this ad-

ditional work does not negative his performance of the primary work of renewal, just as in the book of Joel the Spirit was promised (and the New Testament, through Peter, confirms it, Acts 2: 16) in great measure, including, it is true, the gift of prophecy, but not excluding, first, the quickening of the heart to a new life. "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." Joel 2: 28.

So the Old Testament abundantly teaches that there was an inward change wrought by God in the believer, somewhat corresponding to the New Testament "new birth," and Nicodemus should have known it. It was his fault that he did not. This change likewise had another and more human side corresponding more nearly to conversion. "Take with you words, and return unto Jehovah: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously." Hos. 14: 2. "Return unto Jehovah thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." Hos. 14: 1. "But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments." Neh. 1: 9. "They [the prophets] said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way." Jer. 25: 5. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him re-

turn unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Isa. 55 : 7, etc. Nor can it be said that this was a merely outward ritual turning to the national worship; it is too deeply spiritual and inward for that, while mere outward turning is severely rebuked. "Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto Jehovah your God." Joel 2 : 13. "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, are these." Jer. 7 : 4. But though the prophet appealed to the sinner to turn to Jehovah, yet even in this, God's help was recognized,—“Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art Jehovah my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented." Jer. 31 : 18, 19.

From these, and many other passages which might be cited, the Old Testament evidently taught that an inward change or renewal of heart was a common, but not necessarily universally conscious, experience of the believer. When the sinner, deeply conscious of great sinfulness, prayed for mercy he assumed that a change of heart was necessary; or when the prophet arraigned the debauched and idolatrous,

he too never questioned but that the transition to the service of Jehovah was so great that it could not be effected without a conscious change of life and heart. Just as to the iniquitous Greek and Roman world and to the hypocritical Pharisee, there was no way to holiness except by an entire renewal of nature so radical and startling that such men could not but be conscious of the change. With the Hebrew child like Samuel, as with the child of a Christian home who never knew the time when he did not love the Lord, there could be no such consciousness of change. At certain periods of Israel's iniquity or in certain audiences, it was demanded, just as it is required in the slums and from the godless, but not from the "child of God from his youth," to-day.

The questions will arise, What effect did this change immediately have upon the sinfulness of man? To what extent did it ever, in the present, render him sinless? He is spoken of as "righteous," or "just," or "perfect." And this raises the question as to the meaning in Old Testament usage of these words. The Hebrew word *tsādik*, "righteous" or "just," does not mean sinless. As applied to man, it does not

primarily refer to his inward holiness or sanctification (though it regularly implies the beginning of such), but rather "setting right" or "accounting just." When it is said that "Noah was a just man" (Revised Version, righteous man), the meaning is not that he had become sinless,—his intemperance after the Deluge would forbid that interpretation,—but it does mean that he was uncondemned, that as compared with the rest of the men of his day he stood in a different relation to God. They were condemned, he was accounted just; not that he was actually sinless but was justified, and that even, as we read, was by "grace." "Noah found grace in the eyes of Jehovah." Gen. 6:8. Hence when it is said in the Old Testament that a man is "righteous" or "just," there is no claim made that he is sinless, but rather that God has on certain conditions pardoned and justified him, as he is pleased to do with far from sinless men to-day. This same Hebrew word is frequently used where it could not have any other meaning, *i. e.*, where it could not mean "sinless." "I will not justify the wicked." Ex. 23:7. The same is true in passages where human officials acquit those on trial before them; it could not mean imparting in-

ward holiness. "Which justify the wicked for reward." Isa. 5:23. Even in such a passage as Gen. 18:23, "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" it could not mean sinless; for the "righteous" which were here referred to included Lot and his family, who were believers, it is true, as the Christian to-day is a justified believer; but it needs no argument to show that the record did not consider them sinless.

The same is true of the other words used in the Old Testament to denote the believer. The words *tām* "perfect" and *yāshār* "upright," while they imply a work of grace in the heart, do not imply sinlessness. "And that man [Job] was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil." Job 1:1. But as we read of Job's petulance and almost blasphemy, as we include his failings as well as his faith, we obtain the correct meaning of these words. By giving these words their correct meaning, the meaning which their usage commands; by giving them, I will not say a merely "forensic" sense (for that is a cold theologicalism which means too little), but by allowing them to indicate, as they do, that an attitude of trust and love toward Jehovah had been begun in the heart, and that

God had granted forgiveness of sin, and had granted a new status in his favor, that a godly life, a life of trust existed there, though with many imperfections,—when we give these words this their scriptural meaning, it relieves from self-righteous boasting the Old Testament believer who claimed these attributes. When he, or some person else for him, claimed that he was “righteous,” or “just,” or “perfect,” he did not claim inward sinlessness, but he claimed, what the Christian with deepest humility to-day may claim, that he was justified and that “by grace.” This does not mean, however, that all believers then or now are free from boastfulness. It only means that these Old Testament terms do not express it.

Here we cannot but wonder, to what extent the thoughtful believer was unable to rest with this. He was justified, and yet he was not sinless. It is true he cast himself upon the mercy of Jehovah. But did this, for the thoughtful believer, solve it all, or give satisfaction? There is, here and there, a word that gives us a glimpse of deeper things. “Purge away our sins, for thy name’s sake.” Ps. 79:9. The word translated “purge away” is *kāphār* which in the Piel


form (which is here used) regularly means to "atone for," to "make atonement," to "expiate." "An offering unto Jehovah, to make an atonement for your souls." Ex. 30:15, etc., etc. Unbelievers would like to eliminate from the Old Testament teaching the idea of atonement, but whatever its exact shade of meaning it seems to be there.

But a question more immediately connected with this renewal of the believer's nature is its permanency. Was it abiding? Was it a new type of life which would be everlasting? The doctrine of the so-called "perseverance of the saints" has been drawn from New Testament statements. What is the Old Testament teaching as to the permanence of this "clean heart," this "righteousness," this saved nature? The Old Testament in no place makes a didactic statement upon this point. We can discover what it teaches only in the recorded sketches of the lives of believers, and in their expressions of their pious convictions. The former, in some cases, make it difficult to believe that this renewed nature was necessarily abiding. Saul and Solomon might seem to be examples of this. Yet we must always keep in mind the vicissi-

tudes of even the saved life, and that grace is at work in very imperfect lives, and that in contrasting different periods of some of these lives we may be making our estimate upon too meager information. Our estimate may be at fault. There may be no greater contrast than we would find within the limits of the undoubtedly regenerate lives of men to-day.

Besides, did not the grace of God in the Old Testament make provision to rescue and restore such defects and declensions and sinfulness in those in whom the work of salvation had been begun?—"I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely." Hos. 14:4. So far as recorded testimony is concerned, some backsliders were not healed, but not everything is recorded. For this reason we cannot draw definite conclusions from the lives of such men as Saul and Solomon.

As to the conviction of the believer regarding the permanence of his own saved nature, he oft-times seemed to be in doubt. But every believer is in practical doubt when he is trifling with sin. No matter what his theological theory as to "perseverance" may be, he cannot have a present consciousness of safety while he is doing



that which jeopardizes safety. He cannot have the conviction that he is a servant of God while he is willfully and actively serving Satan. He may be safe in God's everlasting care, but he cannot have a peaceful confidence that he is, while partaking in great sin. It would not be well that he could.

So the fears of the believer expressed in the Old Testament might teach only that there had been consciousness of wandering and willful sin, but not necessarily an entire loss of trust on the part of man or of favor on the part of God. It oftentimes expresses only a wholesome fear, a sense of his need of Divine aid. "O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?" Ps. 74: 1. "In thee, O Jehovah, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion." Ps. 71: 1. Much more frequent than are the expressions of doubt and fear are the believer's expressions of confidence. "Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved." Ps. 62: 1, 2. "I have trusted also in Jehovah; I shall not slide." Ps. 26: 1. "Surely goodness and mercy

shall follow me all the days of my life." Ps. 23: 6.

Yet it must be remembered that these expressions of confidence represent the zenith of Old Testament faith. Many, perhaps the majority, fell far below this. There is no place for narrow dogmatism upon this subject. But the religious experience of the believer of old seems to have been perhaps more fitful than that of Christian times. Although this renewed nature was the work of God's Spirit, as we have seen, yet there was some sense in which the Spirit was then given "in measure." There was a sense in which our Lord's promise was an advance upon earlier promises when he said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever."

Did the Old Testament believer then possess assurance? Some at least knew of a certainty that they were "justified," or "righteous." "Judge me, O Jehovah, according to my righteousness." Ps. 7: 8. "Preserve my soul; for I am holy [or pious]." Ps. 86: 2.

But he had less knowledge of it that it was permanently assured to him, and less knowledge of the blessedness of the future which it entailed.

It was in this respect that his saved life as an experience differed most from that of the New Testament believer, although his trust (and assurance in the case of many, at least) carried him to the close of this life and even to the borderland of the next:—"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Ps. 23: 4. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prov. 4: 18. "And I will dwell in [or return into, as the Hebrew has it] the house of Jehovah for ever and ever." Ps. 23: 6. Yet it gave him little light upon that future. Nor do we yet possess very definite knowledge. He considered forgiveness and salvation something supremely to be desired. "Blessed is the man to whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Ps. 32: 2. But what that blessedness involved was as yet little revealed. The outlook was less bright and hopeful not because the salvation was less real, but because the knowledge of it and of what it implied was less complete. He had not yet come who "brought immortality to light." It existed for the believer of old, but in twilight knowledge. Not having known him as a Divine-human

Saviour, their salvation lacked much of the joyful expectancy of the New Testament believer's hope. For this reason the believer of old spoke not so much of going to meet his Saviour, but of going to meet his kindred or of being "gathered to his fathers." "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." 2 Sam. 12: 23.

Without a risen and ever-living Saviour gone before, and with that future to them, as indeed largely to us, an unrevealed mystery, the outlook beyond death was not inviting. Knowing little in detail of the future of the soul, and knowing something of the corruption of the body in death, it is not to be wondered at that their belief in an eternal blessedness was often clouded by, and expressed in the figure of, the grave. They had no explicit revelation of a Saviour who had triumphed over death and the grave, and to whom they looked forward with joy to meet in glory. This was a necessary limitation in the hopes of those who were saved in olden times, and an incentive to them to hasten the preparation for his coming, "for they without us should not be made perfect."

It has been much debated by some, whether the experience of Old Testament salvation

carried with it a belief and hope of a future existence at all. Men have sought for some unequivocal proof text in the Old Testament upon it. It is one of those great truths which required no proof text. Only the abnormal man, then or now, would need a proof text upon it, and to such a man a proof text would be of doubtful value. It is the fundamental axiom of the seriousness of life. If there were no hereafter, who would make so much of life? The man who professes to disbelieve it allows his actions every day to belie his words.

The Old Testament, in placing so much emphasis upon this present life—how it was lived—in seeking to deepen its meaning, and purify its activities, and enlarge its powers, taught in the most emphatic way that it was not all to end in a cipher, a zero. That would be too much to spend upon what at the conclusion would be nothing!

The future beyond death had very little of brightness, it has little even for believers to-day as an anticipation. It was seldom mentioned except with sadness. Nevertheless, the believer of old believed in, and the Old Testament taught, by implication or more, a blessed future,

veiled as yet, but real,—“When [Hebrew ‘kī’] my father and my mother forsake me, then Jehovah will take me up.” Ps. 27: 10. The word here translated “will take me up” is the Hebrew verb *āsāph* “to gather,” the same word which is used when, in speaking to the pious Josiah, God said, “I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace.” 2 Kings 22: 20. Although the future, for the righteous as well as for the wicked, was generally spoken of with a sense of gloom, because of the as yet limited knowledge of that future and its blessedness for the righteous, yet occasionally the contrast was made. “From men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with hid treasures: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.” Ps. 17: 14, 15.

If Old Testament salvation lacked very much in the fullness of knowledge, and in the hopefulness of outlook regarding the future life of the righteous, it was partly compensated for in the clinging trust which it begot and in the daily

communion which it encouraged. To many a Christian, the blessed doctrine of final victory has not resulted in, and has not encouraged closeness of, fellowship with God, now. Notwithstanding all our favorite Calvinistic arguments thereto (and they are good and scriptural), many have used their theoretical doctrine of ultimate salvation to ease their anxiety in the midst of a listless service. The Old Testament believer clung to what he had, Jehovah. Is it to be wondered at that he made much of his present privileges and blessings?—"Bless Jehovah, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless Jehovah, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities," etc., etc. Ps. 103: 1ff. Is it any wonder that he looked to him in the day of affliction? "Jehovah hear thee in the day of trouble," Ps. 20: 1; or that he so constantly turned to him as his avenger? "O Jehovah my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me." Ps. 7: 1. And so to the truly pious the worship of and communion with Jehovah was highest joy:—"How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Jehovah of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even

fainteth for the courts of Jehovah: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." Ps. 84: 1, 2. "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper [or be cut off] in the house of my God, than to dwell in tents of wickedness." Ps. 84: 10. (The word translated "doorkeeper" is from a root which, not only in Hebrew but also in Aramaic and Arabic, has the meaning to "be cut off," as of life, or to "be snatched away," and this is the translation which best accords with the context, though all of the translators so far as I have noticed have overlooked it.)

They found comfort in the fact that they were God's special possession,—“And they shall be mine, saith Jehovah of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels [or peculiar treasure]; and I will spare them, as a father spareth his own son that serveth him.” Mal. 3: 17. When believers, in the Old Testament, are called “sons of God,” it is because of this feature, that they serve him, rather than upon the ground given in the New Testament that they have been born again. The Old Testament renewal, real and spirit-wrought as it was, was yet not generally conceived of as a new birth. Je-

hovah was the God or Father of believers, and they were his children, not so much because of the change of heart, but especially because of the moral relation which they occupied toward Jehovah, because they trusted him and served him.

The saved life then according to Old Testament teaching was sometimes, though not always, one of conscious renewal. Where the antecedents required it, there was an explicit confession of sin, inward repentance, and a conscious turning to a life of trust and service of God. Not that the believer thereupon supposed that he thereby became sinless, but rather "just," etc., in the sense of justified, or accepted.

As to the permanence of this new life, we have seen that both in experience and in fact there is less evidence that it was permanent in every believer than after the ascension of our Lord and the sending of the Comforter to abide forever. The hope of the future which this salvation begot was less definite and less inviting, both because of the thick veil which hid it, and because that the Divine-human Christ, "the Lamb," was not yet "the light thereof." But in the present the salvation of the saved was a blessed

and comforting reality which gave scope for and encouraged an abounding trust in Jehovah, which left with God much which he had not yet been pleased to reveal : he walked with God. God was at his right hand that he should not be moved, and dwelling in the secret place of the Most High he abode under the shadow of the Almighty. Knowing less than we do, not only of "secondary causes," but also of the ground of atonement, he did not place anything between God and himself. God was real and near.



VIII

OLD TESTAMENT SALVATION IN RELATION TO THE INDIVIDUAL AND TO THE WORLD

THE fact remains that this salvation, as it was set forth in the Old Testament, affected the lives of only a very limited part of the human family. Whether or not multitudes were saved from sin and are now in God's favoring presence, through some other knowledge, or through similar knowledge otherwise communicated, the fact remains that this salvation, as specially made known in the Old Testament, came to the knowledge of, and affected the lives of, only a very small fraction of mankind. Was this because it was not adapted to more than this one nation? Was it a national or an individual salvation? For if it was for the individual, then it was also for the world. The sinful identity of the entire human race makes it so. And a salvation which is not for the whole of mankind is not even for the individual. How then was its "extension" national, while its "intension" was individual and universal?

It will not do to pass by the difficulties here, or cite only those texts which prove one phase of this salvation. There is a material and national phase of salvation frequently promised in the Old Testament, just as the godliness of the New Testament is "profitable unto all things, having promise" not only of the life which is to come, but of "the life that now is." It may be the judgment of many that in the Old Testament the proportion of emphasis which is placed upon the present material or national side of salvation, is greater than it is in the New Testament. But in any case it is there, whether it be salvation from the armed enemy, or from trouble, or whatever form of present evil. "Thus Jehovah saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians." Ex. 14:30. "Save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me." Ps. 7:1. "He saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy." Ps. 106:10. Very many other passages may be cited to show that the Old Testament taught that Jehovah saved his people either individually or collectively from present ills. This was only another way of saying that Jehovah was also the God of providence.

Here let it be noted, that even this material and often national deliverance was not a thing by itself. It was linked to, and dependent upon, spiritual salvation. God did not promise to save Israel, or the individual Israelite, unconditionally. The condition upon which he would fight their battles for them was that they would forsake their sins and obey him and serve him. When they did not accept the salvation from sin which he offered them, he did not give them the lesser deliverance, from their enemies, but gave them up to the will of their enemies. Could any fact be more clearly taught in the Old Testament than this, that in whatever sense we take the word "save" it was "he saveth such as be of a contrite spirit"? Ps. 34:18. All his outward, material or national deliverances, were only secondary and auxiliary to his higher and spiritual salvation, and the Old Testament writers clearly discerned this and taught it. If modern students of the Old Testament overlook it, it is their mistake. Frequently, of course, the wicked received temporal deliverance along with the righteous among whom they dwelt. Just as the New Testament figure puts it, the tares are allowed to remain for a time in the favored soil with the

wheat : so in the Old Testament the wicked were sometimes spared because of the "remnant" of righteous among them. "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom." Isa. 1:9. But spiritual and individual salvation lay always at the base of even temporal and national deliverance.

Moses repeatedly warned the children of Israel that their material and temporal welfare as a people would depend upon their spiritual relation to God. "Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, to do them, that ye may live." Deut. 4:1. "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life : but teach them to thy sons, and thy sons' sons." Deut. 4:9. "It shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that Jehovah thy God shall set thee on high above all nations of the earth : and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the

voice of Jehovah thy God." Deut. 28: 1, 2. So in the Psalms,—“ Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart." Ps. 73: 1, etc.

Thus there was material and national deliverance only upon the ground of spiritual salvation. This spiritual salvation, this salvation from sin, was individual. It was collective only as it was first individual, just as the church or the nation to-day is saved only in so far as the individuals composing it are saved. This fact was not always emphasized in the Old Testament; it did not require to be. But lack of emphasis does not prove nonexistence. It was so generally acknowledged and so self-evident, that it was only when, in days of formality and irreligion, men sought to take refuge under the cloak of nationalism or collectivism, that the individualism of salvation was explicitly emphasized. It was in such a period that our Lord emphasized the personal, individual character of salvation, because many of the scribes and Pharisees thought to take shelter in the collectivism of the church, or that they had Abraham as their father. He did not excuse them for their interpretation of the Old Testament salvation. He rather rebuked them for it. He did not justify it as being the

true teaching of their Scriptures. He rather condemned it.

It was in similar periods of religious formality and hypocrisy that Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel and others of the same time gave considerable emphasis to this same truth. Not that this was a new teaching produced at this time by the wreckage of national hopes, as some have supposed. It is written deeply in the Old Testament teaching of salvation from the very beginning. But the unshamed hypocrisy and formality of the period of the great prophets called for a special emphasis being placed upon it. Yet the collective responsibilities and privileges were not overlooked. "Remember, O Jacob and Israel . . . I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins." Isa. 44: 21, 22. "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more." Jer. 31: 34. "I will save you from all your uncleannesses." Ezek. 36: 29. Yet at such times men were specially reminded of their individual responsibility. "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips," etc. Isa. 6: 5. "In those days they shall no more say, The fathers have eaten a sour grape,

and the children's teeth are set on edge." Jer. 31 : 29. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Ezek. 18 : 4.

But it would be a mistake to suppose that this idea of individual salvation and responsibility was a product of the period of these prophets, or that it was caused by the failure of national hopes. Our Lord's emphasis of this same teaching did not make it a new idea, neither did the emphasis placed upon it by the great prophets. It is found elsewhere ; it is in the Old Testament plan of salvation from the beginning, and is essential to it, though it is marvelous how many fairly evangelical scholars have fallen into the habit of repeating the skeptic's mistake in preference to what the Scripture says. Even Dr. Forrest¹ detracts from his many good things by repeating it as a part of his "development" programme, to which he is so partial. But the idea of a spiritual, individual salvation is the undoubted teaching of the Old Testament from the beginning. It was the type of salvation by which the individual Abel was saved, and it was especially spiritual. It was a remedy, not for mere physical ills, but for the great catastrophe

¹ *The Christ of History and Experience*, pp. 12, 13.

of sin which had just overtaken man. The individual character of salvation could not have been more decidedly expressed than in this first family of the race. It was as an individual that Abel was accepted and forgiven and saved, and it was as an individual that Cain was rejected, and sin was the question at issue. It was this individual, spiritual type of salvation which was handed down by the pious of each generation. It is voiced in the Psalmist's devotion :—" Who shall abide in thy tabernacle ? who shall dwell in thy holy hill ? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor." Ps. 15 : 1-3.

It was as an individual that Noah "walked with God." It was as an individual that Abraham obeyed Jehovah, and even though his faith brought collective blessings to his descendants, as the faith and prayer of godly parents bring similar blessings upon posterity to-day, yet these were lesser and incidental blessings ; and those of his descendants who rejected the offer of a spiritual salvation and refused to serve Jehovah, were soon deprived of even these reflected bless-

ings which had come to them through Abraham. The salvation of each individual from sin was ever determined by his own attitude toward Jehovah. From the first human family until the close of its record, the Old Testament clearly teaches that salvation was individual and spiritual, and that material and national salvation was quite secondary and was promised, not independently, but as an accompaniment of that which was individual and spiritual, just as the New Testament teaches: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all other things shall be added unto you."

Why, then, did this salvation reach so limited a portion of mankind? Did it not engender a missionary or evangelistic spirit in its recipients? Men do not make a missionary crusade to those who are possessed of much the same belief as themselves. That would seem presumptuous. That is what makes it difficult for the ordinary Christian of to-day to speak to his moralist neighbor about his salvation. A belief that some very wide spiritual difference exists, is essential to any considerable missionary effort by one people for another. In the early generations sin had soon become so general that (except the

again as a Jew, we would not expect to find any missionary zeal in him. As between the different peoples at the time there seems to have been little difference: distinctions were narrow; and besides there were in those early days many instances of men who preached righteousness to a limited circle.

In the days of Abraham, too, the several peoples were very similar in religious belief and in morals. Abraham and Ishmael and Pharaoh differed upon some points, but there was evidently much in common in their religious ideas. But even Abraham did not launch a missionary enterprise. He deemed it wise to flee from the evil even of his own land rather than to attack them. This was God's way at this period of religious weakness. And this is the principle which had to govern much of the policy of believers, until the church should become strong enough to attack collective evil, in foreign regions, to assume the aggressive.

In those early days, no one people as a whole differed much from any other people, in their knowledge of God and of the way of salvation from sin. All peoples had knowledge sufficient. In many respects the people of Abraham's an-

cestry had just about the same type of laws and morals as Abraham's descendants, lacking considerable special religious training afterwards given and established. Why should it be thought strange that Hammurabi's laws and those of Moses were very similar? It would be very strange if they were not. The beliefs and morals of adjacent peoples had much in common, though some peoples, as they separated from their fellow-peoples, were fast losing the truth first revealed to their common ancestors,—Adam and Abel and Seth and Noah and others; or they were covering it up with idolatrous inventions. But in general they were very similar to one another. Here and there were believers like Abraham and Melchizedek,—not as lonely examples as have been supposed, perhaps—but the majority of every people in that period were, according to the Old Testament, living in sin.

Even when by special revelation and separation the believing descendants of Abraham became a better organized body, they seem scarcely to have been able to maintain their own religious position, much less to risk their own souls amid the alluring temptations of more sinful peoples. The children of Israel constantly required super-

natural encouragement and teaching themselves, to advance them in holiness, or to prevent them from falling into the grosser beliefs and morals of adjacent peoples. Hence the question of their spreading the knowledge of this salvation was for some time delayed. A few individual cases only are recorded. Elijah went to Zidon. Jonah, though unwillingly, went to Nineveh. Many of the prophets had a word against, though apparently not directly to, several of the surrounding peoples,—Damascus, or Edom, or Moab, or Philistia. And Amos, stern prophet that he was, declared that God's mercy toward these Gentile peoples had been very great, that it was not for even the full complement of offenses, the "three," but for the "four," that God would not turn back his intended punishment.

But before we question the vitality of this Old Testament salvation, or censure the believer of old for not having proclaimed it to the world, we must remember the lethargy of the Christian Church, with its more complete revelation, not only in many periods onward from the fourth Christian century, but even during our own boasted Protestant régime from Luther until Carey. The Christian's neglect to send the New

Testament news of salvation far and near, does not prove the absolute unreality of his salvation. The Old Testament believer, too, largely failed in this, though his neglect was more excusable in the days of the church's weakness. Nevertheless, Malachi describes a day prior to his time, when the church had been characterized by a more evangelistic spirit, when the priesthood had been more faithful in the dissemination of saving truth :—" The law of truth was in his [the priest's] mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips : he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth : for he is the messenger of Jehovah of hosts." Mal. 2 : 6, 7.

In the early generations, moreover, when the creed of redemption was less formally conceived by men, and when, instead of an explicit faith in a well-defined personal and vicarious Saviour, salvation involved, rather, a large and sufficient but somewhat undefined trust in Jehovah, there was not a very exact conception of the several steps in that process of salvation ; theologically speaking, there was no well-defined doctrine of the *ordo salutis*. The line between the saved

and the unsaved, was less sharply drawn, *i. e.*, by men; the tests were less upon the lips of men; and less definiteness of responsibility was felt regarding the fellow-sinner. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to suppose that it was entirely absent. Could any one have pleaded more earnestly or self-denyingly for others than did Moses? So likewise note the anxiety of the prophets in general for their people, or of pious parents like Job for the spiritual welfare of their families. Noah preached to his fellow-men not merely that they might escape physical calamity, but he was a "preacher of righteousness." Ezekiel made his message as direct as the modern evangelist, and declares the obligation which rests upon believers of being watchful for the spiritual welfare of their fellow-men. "If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way . . . his blood will I require at thine hand." Ezek. 33:8.

Old Testament salvation was a reality for which the believer could thank God, who had "forgiven all his iniquities," who had "redeemed his life from destruction." But it did not arouse every believer to a full sense of responsibility; neither does the clearer and more

complete New Testament teaching of to-day. But the failures and negligence of some believers will never prove the non-existence of a teaching.

If this salvation was a salvation of the individual from sin, and if it was adapted to all men, and yet if it failed to reach the majority, what shall be said of those whom it failed to reach, at least in this form, or through this means? Did those multitudes perish spiritually because they did not possess the Old Testament message of salvation?

In answer to this, we cannot conclude that they did not possess the essentials of it. They may well have had as copious a revelation as Abel possessed. The revelation which Abel possessed was the common heritage of all succeeding generations, except as some sections of the race neglected and lost it to their descendants. The great majority of early peoples must have possessed a knowledge of God and of the way of salvation, similar to that which Abel possessed and through which he was saved. If they perished it was not for lack of essential truth, but for the disobedience and perversity which, according to the record that

we possess, made the difference between Cain and Abel.

We can never determine by rule what would be the minimum of knowledge necessary to the salvation of any individual, nor that it would be exactly the same in each case. So, although wickedness did increase, and in that early period did become almost universal, yet there were doubtless many, very many, unrecorded believers who lived and died in a saving trust in God.

When the New Testament declares, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned," Mark 16: 16, it makes this declaration as the only alternative to those who hear it in this form. But he would be a hasty interpreter who would conclude that this fixes exactly the area of salvation, or who would say that absolutely no one under any circumstances, without an explicit faith in a personal Christ, is saved to-day. To have Christ presented to us and then not to accept and believe in him would be to reject him. That is clear. But there are other cases, regarding which information would not increase the zeal of the believer, nor induce

repentance and faith in the unbeliever, and regarding which God has kept his counsel. False views alone will not exclude from salvation, will not, within considerable range at least, obliterate faith. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill . . . Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven," Matt. 5: 17, 19, but "in the kingdom." So in olden times there were many, doubtless, who trusted in God and were saved, who lacked the correctness of knowledge of God which the Old Testament contained. Jehovah's mercy, which, in advance of a definitely unfolded atonement, was the sinner's hope, was wide and deep. And yet it was not indiscriminate.


We would not be understood as saying that the Old Testament revealed nothing concerning atonement, or even the atoning work of the Messiah. When it taught that "he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him; and by his stripes we are healed," it made a statement which sane

exegesis can never attach to any one except to Messiah—except to the Lord Jesus Christ. But this and other Messianic passages added very little to the objective content of the faith of the Old Testament believer. It had been and was sufficient without these, for the object of his trust was rather Jehovah. But these revelations regarding the Atonement or other work of Messiah were of untold value to the New Testament believer. Through them the early disciples were convinced that he was indeed the Christ. They saw that these predictions were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth.

They were for the early disciples and for us, rather than for the Old Testament believer. They created some additional expectation and inquiry in him, but altered very little the character or content of his faith. For to the last, the Old Testament believer put his trust in Jehovah mainly, and left the details of his salvation with him. His was an attitude of trust, rather than a sharply-defined faith.

All this should enable us to interpret calmly and correctly the periods of spiritual declension in the history of the Old Testament Church. That a spiritual salvation, together with a de-

tailed system of worship and sacrifice, should have been in existence in the days of Moses, and with less complete ritual in earlier days, and then that in the periods of the judges and kings there should have been such apparent absence of these, according to the biblical record, has been a stumbling-block to many scholars. But such periods of declension have repeatedly occurred whenever, whether on account of adverse political crises or other causes, believers have grown careless and have neglected the means of grace and the practical religious life which accompany this salvation. It will follow to-day. These periods of spiritual declension only exemplify the fact that human nature was the same then as it is now, and emphasize the necessity, not only of a supernatural revelation on the part of God, but also of vigilant effort upon the part of believers, if true religion is to prevail upon the earth. Temporary decline of religion does not prove that it has never in the past existed. These are facts which we recognize. The fact that Deism reigned for a time in England in the seventeenth century does not prove that evangelical Puritanism had not been cherished there the preceding century. No one considers that the presence of



unbelief in Germany to-day proves that the Germany of Luther's day was not spiritually religious. Neither should any person think that because comparatively little of the Mosaic worship was practiced in the stormy days of the judges and kings, therefore it had not existed in the preceding period.

With the Old Testament record so transparently honest, and the causes of declension so clearly stated, it is almost inexcusable for any one to stumble here, or to think that a period of apostasy proves that spiritual and orderly worship had not previously existed. The declensions which mark from time to time the history of the children of Israel are paralleled by even more serious declensions and apostasies among other peoples, some of whom have not yet been reclaimed. Those nations which we are accustomed to call "heathen" peoples began with the same simple but sufficient knowledge of salvation as Abel possessed. But in their emigrations, and without places of fixed religious association, they drifted into ignorance and unbelief. When, later, they became more stative in their habits, and felt more the need of some form of worship and some fixed belief as they

remained among their sorrows or buried their dead in their midst, they built up systems of religion into which they wove very little of the original truth.

It is a noteworthy fact that the great ethnic religions give unmistakable evidence of having sprung from monotheistic antecedents. Brahmanism had one all-pervading, all-controlling Spirit which they called "Bruhm" or "Brahmă." "Brahmă is before all. All things are by him and all things are consubstantial with him," etc.¹ And when we say this of Brahmanism it includes its offspring, Buddhism. Taouism of to-day again is an almost unrecognizable descendant of the lofty scriptural-like conceptions of the great Lao-Tse. And Confucianism, so far as it is a religion at all, looked backward to earlier times to a monotheism² from which they had departed and which they had lost. Mohammedanism is, of course, an open example of a religion rising upon the remnants of an apostasy, of the true revelation of God.

These "heathen" systems are but extreme examples of Israel's periods of declension. But

¹ *The Religions of the World*, Principal Grant, p. 85.

² *The Religions of the World*, p. 48.

while the "heathen" peoples in most cases degenerated into baser idolatry and error, Israel was partially restored by the messages of the prophets who were from time to time supernaturally raised up among them. What Schultz characterizes as "traces of Semitic heathenism in the Old Testament,"¹ is a reversion of the process, due to a double misunderstanding upon his part, viz., his inability to appreciate the spiritual character of the Old Testament religion itself, and his partiality for always making the Old Testament, rather than heathenism, the debtor.

The salvation presented in the Old Testament was, as the circumstances of its first announcement teach, for sin—for the individual's sin—and for all the race. But, like New Testament salvation, it was never accepted by all who needed it; nor was it equally accepted by each successive age; neither did those who received its blessings ever proclaim it, in life or in word, as they should have done. But it was a sufficient salvation, the way by which multitudes, now robed in white,

¹ *Old Testament Theology*, Eng. Trans., Vol. I, p. 114.

ascended from sin to glory. Let no man misrepresent it ! Let no man despise it !

And yet, it was not complete. It was not to be destroyed, however, but to be completed. And this is the scriptural place of New Testament teaching in the plan of salvation. It is its greater light, its fuller revelation, its brighter crown. It is one page farther toward that larger knowledge, when we " shall know, even as we are known."



